THE
ENGLISH REVIEW
SEPTEMBER, 1911

The Prayer

By John Galsworthy

IF on a Spring night I went by,
And God were standing there,
What is the prayer that I would cry
To Him? This is the prayer:

"O Lord of Courage grave,
O Master of this Night of Spring!
Make firm in me a heart too brave
To ask Thee anything!"

Days Too Short

By William H. Davies

When primroses are out in Spring,
  And small, blue violets come between ;
  When merry birds sing on boughs green,
And rills, as soon as born, must sing ;

When butterflies will make side-leaps,
  As though escaped from Nature's hand
  Ere perfect quite ; and bees will stand
Upon their heads in fragrant deeps ;

When small clouds are so silvery white
  Each seems a broken rimmèd moon—
  When such things are, this world too soon,
For me, doth wear the veil of Night.

Two Poems

By James Elroy Flecker

I

DON JUAN DECLAIMS.

I AM Don Juan, curst from age to age
By priestly tract and sentimental stage,
Branded a villain, or believed a fool,
Battered by hatred, seared by ridicule,
Noble on earth, all but a king in hell,
I am Don Juan with a tale to tell.
    Hot leapt the dawn from deep Plutonian fires
And ran like blood among the twinkling spires.
The market quickened : carts came rattling down :
Good human music roared about the town,
And " Come," they sang " and buy the best of Spain's
Great fire-skinned fruits with cold and streaming veins ! "
Others, " The man who'd make a lordly dish
Would buy my speckled or my silver fish ! "
And some, " I stitch you raiment to the rule ! "
And some, " I sell you attar of Stamboul ! "
" And I have lapis for your love to wear,
Pearls for her neck, and amber for her hair ! "
Death has its gleams ! They swing before me still,
The shapes and sounds and colours of Seville.
    For there I learnt to love the plot, the fight,
The masker's cloak, the ladder set for flight,
The stern pursuit, the rapier's glint of death,
The scent of starlit roses, beauty's breath,
The music and the passion and the prize,
Aragon lips or Andalusian eyes.
    Nectar they taste who quaff it with a song,
Not they who strain and drain it all day long :
Nor on the lotus only sinks the bee :
He knows good honey needs variety.

This day, a democrat, I scoured the town ;
Courting, the next, I brought a princess down :
Now in some lady's panelled chamber hid
Achieved what love approves and laws forbid,
Now walked and whistled round the sleepy farms,
And clasped a Dulcinea in my arms.
I was the true, the grand idealist :
My light could pierce the pretty golden mist
That hides from common souls the starrier climes :
I loved as small men do ten thousand times ;
Rose to the blue triumphant, curved my bow,
Set high the mark, and brought an angel low,
And laced with that brave body and shining soul
Learnt how to live, then learnt to love the whole.
And I first broke that jungle dark and dense
Which hides the silver house of Common-sense,
And dissipated that disastrous lie
Which makes a God of stuffless Unity,
And drave the dark behind me, and revealed
A Pagan sunrise on a Christian field.
My legend tells how once by passion moved
I slew the father of a girl I loved :
Then summoned, like an old and hardened sinner,
The brand-new statue of the dead to dinner.
My ribald guests, with Spanish wine aflame,
Were most delighted when the statue came,
Bowed to the party, made a little speech,
And bore me off beyond their human reach.
Well, priests must flourish and the truth must pale :
A very pious, entertaining tale.
But this believe : I struck a ringing blow
At sour Authority's ancestral show,
And stirred the sawdust understuffing all
The sceptred or the surpliced ritual.
I willed my happiness, kept bright and brave
My thoughts and deeds that side the accursed grave.
Life was a ten-course banquet after all,
And neatly finished by a funeral.
" Pale guest, why strip the roses from your brow ?
We hope to feast till morning." " Who knocks now?"
" Twelve of the clock, Don Juan ! " In came he,
That shining tall and cold Authority,
Whose marble lips look down on lips that pray,
And took my hand, and I was led away.

TWO POEMS

II

THE DYING PATRIOT.

Day breaks on England down the Kentish hills
Singing in the silence of the meadow-footing rills,
Day of my dreams, O day!
I saw them march from Dover, long ago,
With their silver cross before them, singing low,
Monks of Rome from their home where the blue seas break in foam,
And Augustine with his feet of snow.

Noon strikes in England, noon on Oxford Town
—Beauty she was statue cold—there's blood upon her gown:
Noon of my dreams, O noon!
Proud and godly kings had built her long ago
Comeliest of wisdom's cities here below,
With her fair and floral air and the love that lingers there,
And the streets where the great men go.

Evening on the olden, the golden sea of Wales
When the first star shivers and the last wave pales:
O evening dreams!
There's a house that Britons walked in long ago
Where now the springs of ocean fall and flow,
And the dead, robed in red, and sea-lilies overhead
Sway when the long winds blow.

Sleep not, my country: though night is here, afar
Your children of the morning are clamorous for war:
Fire in the night, O dreams.
Though she send you as she sent you, long ago,
South to desert, East to ocean, West to snow,
West of these out to seas colder than the Hebrides
I must go
Where the fleet of stars is anchored and the young star-captains glow.

In the Abbey

. . . ston ✠ Miles ✠ sepultus ✠ est ✠
Foot-fretted, scorned letters say—
Forgot, here the brave find rest.

Pass'd, perished, the coat, the crest—
His name—with the soul away—
. . . ston, Miles, sepultus est.

What heart 'neath this stone is prest,
That throbbed, and again is clay ?
Forgot, here the brave find rest.

Such honour could fire one breast
Thro' Trafalgar's flame-flushed day—
. . . ston, Miles, sepultus est.

Aye, they who served England best
For welcome thus cold could pray—
Forgot, here the brave find rest.

Where idlers, on empty quest,
O'er valorous dust may stray,
Forgot, here the brave find rest—
. . . ston, Miles, sepultus est.

C. J. D.

Androgynism ; or, Woman Playing at Man

From the Unpublished MSS. of the late Charles Reade

II

THE criticism I anticipate upon this is deceit and diddle. Add the prefix "self" and you will not be much out in your calculation. Read between the lines. The writer says: "I am a fool to be in love with you, but I will walk eight miles along a dreary road, and pay all your expenses out of my own savings [Tom, I take it, was not the man to bleed for any cracked prank of his androgynous wife] rather than lose you." Whereunto I can append a bit of information that I obtained from an extraneous source. Madam Fred had noted certain nods and smiles pass between Miss Nelly and sundry specimens of the male sex who had paid homage to her beauty. It was nothing more than girlish vanity—the instinct which causes every daughter of Eve to court admiration. There was nothing unfaithful, nothing wrong, in the beaming laugh of little Nelly's eyes. Yet it consumed hypothetical Fred with jealousy. That was why—one solid reason at least—she, or he, had registered a resolve that by hook or by crook, by cajoling and caressing, by every art in the feminine armoury, Nelly should be spirited away from Bedford. The androgyne's love for the girl was self-deceit *in excelsis;* it generated that other kind of deceit which seems to be the speciality of the criminal.

Number two suggests that the tryst was duly kept. D. Q. S.

MY OWN BELOVED ONE,—I need scarcely tell you how I am to-day, for you may judge I am rather tired. We did not get home till twelve o'clock, nor could we rest once, for all the public-houses were closed. But I did not mind; I could have kept on and on till I dropped for your sake, my own precious one. Think not that I regret walking with you, for I do not, though I fear the night air did me no good; and I am sure you, my darling, must have been very, very tired, though you would not own it. I hope you feel no ill-effects of it to-day. Do you feel lonely? *I do.* Oh, Nelly, it seems to me that I love you more every hour I live. Did ever man love as I love

you? I believe never. A loving, faithful heart—oh, it is a precious thing! Did you ever feel its value? Many would give up wealth and station for one loving heart, but riches cannot purchase *love*.

Now, my precious one, I hope you will not forget *Friday. Come in the morning*, and, oh, till then every hour will appear a day. *It is best to come by the first train.* I will meet you at the station. Darling, surely as it is your birthday Father will let you come. You must use all your influence with him, and not disappoint me. More I will not say. You understand, dearest. If you get this to-morrow, Wednesday, will you write me a line, dear? Good-bye, my precious treasure, and may the Almighty smile upon and bless you for ever is the sincere prayer of your affectionate, faithful, though lonely,

FRED.

A thousand kisses, my precious love. My heart is dreadful. I will lie down a little while I think. Farewell for a little while. God for ever bless thee. Kindest love to dear Lizzie and Mother. Father's best love to his child.

The problem in metaphysics here formulated almost philosophically in the very midst of a torrent of gush, "Did ever *man* love as I love you?" though solved offhand with "I believe never," opens up a strange vista for the powerful imagination. "Passing the love of women" has been accepted as a descriptive definition of the purest affection. This, however, was a woman's love, and not something beyond it, or above it. We are lost in haze, for I have the best of reasons for rejecting the theory of this being mere low scoundrelism—a wire-drawn practical joke, contemptible as a hoax of Theodore Hook; or, worse still, a dodge to decoy innocence into vice, for which there cannot be discovered one shred of evidence, the collective facts pointing the other way. What lies behind the scenes is this: women convert men into idols—that may be affirmed as an axiom. Place an artificial barrier between Her and Him, and the idolatry increases tenfold; *e.g.*, where the object happens to be a priest, debarred from matrimony, or another's husband. Now—I ask for information—is it conceivable that the logic of an idolatress should take one step further and transfer her worship to an object yet more fatally feminine than a priest—say to one of her own sex, radiant with a loveliness infinitely superior to that of Apollo?

Mrs. Fred said "Yes," and I accept her as a true witness as regards her own highly exceptional case.

We will now glance at the third and last of this series of epistles. The previous effusion missed its mark; either the Smith family declined to forgo the gratification of keeping Nelly's birthday with Nelly—the drama of *Hamlet* would fall flat with the part of Ophelia omitted—or Miss Nelly began to waver. She was only sixteen and sweetly silly. Sixteen never stops to think except when it steps on a piece of orange-peel. Perhaps someone had been eating oranges in Bedfordshire—who knows?

This then is number three.

My Own Dear Nelly,—I am very much disappointed to think you are not coming on Friday *morning*, as Grandmother is going on Saturday. She came on Thursday, but I thought it would be useless to ask you to come before Friday; but we certainly did *think* your father would not have denied us the *pleasure* of seeing you then. But do ask him to let you come by the afternoon train—that is, if you wish it. I am sorry to hear you were so tired after your walk; but I was afraid it would be so. I trust you are better now, my precious one.

I will say no more now, trusting I shall have the pleasure of seeing you *to-morrow*—do not disappoint us—and with kindest love to dear Father, Mother, Lizzie, and all friends, believe me, my own dear darling, to remain, ever yours faithfully and devotedly,

F. Coombe.

I will be at the station to-morrow afternoon. God for ever bless thee, my own dear one.

Many happy returns of the day, my dearest love; but I will give you my wishes when I see you. God bless thee.

"Will you walk into my parlour?" said the spider to the fly. This pretty fly, being, as I premised, silly, fluttered straight into the web. The grandmother was a myth, a Mrs. Harris; Fred had utilised the old lady as a highly respectable dummy. It served as bait for Nelly. She felt the obligation of making the acquaintance of her sweetheart's most venerable female relative. Once in the clutches of that devoted lover escape became impossible. There occurred, I grant, a bit of a scene, for when it actually came to the point, Nelly—idiot as she was—almost jibbed. It seemed utterly absurd to bolt when the road lay quite clear, minus the smallest obstacle. Fred, nevertheless, would have it so. *Ergo*, the two levanted

for an address in Sloane Street, but omitted to take tickets for London.

When I placed the narrative up to this point before the shrewdest of London editors, a journalist saturated with police reports, he vaulted with professional velocity to a conclusion consistent with the foregoing premisses, but not by any means a necessary inference from them. In a word, he attributed sinister motives to either Coombe. A little later on the police, accustomed equally to broad generalisation, took the same view. The magistrates came to the consideration of the case with a similar prepossession. Yet they were all demonstrated to be wrong, and this without the rebutting evidence I have in my possession. Folly plus deceit, though magnified a thousand-fold, is not vice, neither is it conspiracy to deprave, nor any crime recognised by human law. That, *bien entendu*, does not presuppose it to be less than reprehensible. That does not go to declare that it deserves immunity from punishment. Far from it. Folly has done more wrong to the world than wickedness, and deceit so closely approximates criminality as to come within touch of the rope's end, and indeed to get a taste thereof sometimes. All I contend for is a just verdict on a wrong-headed woman. Let us call the androgyne by her right appellation, but spare her the imputation of motives whereof she was innocent.

The sequel can only be told with the aid of apparently inconsequent data aided by *a priori* reasoning. Dismissing for the moment the milk-and-water eroticism which had been the *causa causans* of this petty comedy of errors, and reverting to the facts, they may be thus summarised.

(1) In order to assist in boiling the pot, Kate Coombe assumed man's attire, pretended to be her husband's son and worked at his trade.

(2) Meeting pretty Nelly Smith she forgot her sex, accepting the illusion of her own manufacture as reality.

N.B.—George IV. lied about being present at Waterloo till he got to believe his own lie, and made love with the art of a woman backed by the *virilis cultus* of Achilles.

(3) The Smith family, to her embarrassment, favoured her suit. She had only to buy the wedding-ring, be asked in Church, and the trick was done.

(4) Compelled to temporise, prevaricate and procrastinate, yet being herself the biter bit, consumed by a grand if irrational passion, she felt the situation intolerable. A single false move might disclose the entire game. Husband, too, got to be

irritated and apprehensive. They resolved on the strategy of the weak—flight.

(5) But here prudence was flung to the winds. Nothing would satisfy this eccentric woman but for the female object of her adoration to elope with her. The law, under certain circumstances, calls that abduction—an ugly word. She hoped to elude the charge.

(6) She therefore contrived that the girl should incur the entire responsibility for an act of superlative unwisdom. As regards the rest, due care was exercised to prevent the moral character of either from falling under suspicion.

Thus far all is intelligible. But now we come to a piece of insensate and vulgar cunning, the outcome of cowardice. Kate Coombe the real—Fred the false—simply funked the whole Smith family. There was cause enough for that, surely; but she need not have lost her head. I suppose the ancient maxim, "*Quem deus perdere vult, prius dementat*," has been demonstrated so often as to form a universal rule.

Still it was fatuous on her part, after spiriting away Mr. Smith's daughter, to forbid that little fool to hold any communication with her parents, home, or friends. This amazing blunder invited, indeed rendered inevitable, police interference. It could only have succeeded had Smith been a tame cat or totally indifferent to the fate of a daughter he doted upon.

Smith, now, was not compounded of violin-strings or anything so musical. There was nothing of the cat about the honest yeoman, not even its claws. So poorly endowed was the good fellow with feline instinct, that, I give you my word, it took him three mortal weeks to smell a rat.

But when he did get scent he gave tongue like a fine old foxhound. To the police he went raging, neither did he go in vain.

They descended judgmatically upon the house where the parties—that is their negative phraseology—had lodged at Bedford; for, previous to consulting them, Smith had written to No. 9 Sloane Street, and when his letter came back per the post mortuary, undertook a journey to that respectable region at his own costs and charges, to be accurately well disillusioned. Sloane Street seldom, if ever, harbours journeymen painters. In the Bedford lodgings they found nothing, absolutely nothing. Fred had been too wideawake to leave a clue. But they learnt this much, that the parties had come from Woburn. They had chattered to that extent when first they arrived.

Application accordingly to police at Woburn. Reply that

a man answering to description *with his wife* had lodged in the town, but there was no son with them. It wore, therefore, the appearance of a false scent, but inasmuch as the description of the man was very true to life, the Woburn police with commendable diligence instituted a careful search, resulting in the discovery of a letter headed "Norwood Terrace, Cheltenham," addressed "My dear Kate," and signed "Tozer." This precious document, unpromising though it seemed, was handed to Smith by the Bedford Inspector coupled with a recommendation to communicate with the writer.

The angry papa did so, but with due caution, appealing for aid to trace his missing daughter, and carefully avoiding all reference to the police, or any kind of menace. This was wise. Had he thundered, Cheltenham in alarm would have shielded itself by complete reticence.

The first reply was merely tentative. By the advice of his mentor of the police office he fired a second shot, but still in the same gentle tone. That reassured the people at the other end and evoked the following very straightforward missive.

Cheltenham, August 26th, 1860.

Sir,—I have just received your letter, and am exceedingly sorry that your daughter has not returned to her home. I doubt not but that in your present distressed state of mind you overlooked some of the contents of my letter to you, which, I believe, stated that the elder man, the painter, is my son, a married man without any family. His wife is some years younger than himself. She is the daughter of Mrs. Tozer, who is my sister.

As I before mentioned to you, I expect the young *man*, as you call him, is no other than his wife, and, if so, cannot conceive why they have acted as you describe.

Mrs. Tozer has told me that she received a letter from her daughter a few days ago, but without any address, and posted at Northampton. She made no mention whatever of these circumstances, nor of their leaving Bedford.

I shall feel much pleasure in giving you any information, but for a long time I have not received a letter from him, and consequently am as ignorant as you are respecting him.

We feel equally anxious with yourself, and shall be happy to hear of your daughter's return.

I am, sir,
Very respectfully,
S. Coombe.

The fat was already in the fire. Smith himself, his wife, Lizzie, Sam, and Deborah, all rubbed noses over this plain suggestion of androgyny. Sam recollected the unmanly and unnatural aversion of "Fred" to that interesting animal the ferret, and his brutal and ultra-feminine abhorrence of the pleasant and ennobling sport of rat-catching. Lizzie, with the soul of Juno and the bitter memory, *spretæ injuria formæ*, averred undisguisedly that when Fred kissed her—and he was always at it all round, not sparing even Deborah, that lusty and Dutch-built craft—it didn't seem like a man; whereupon her papa, whose normally saccharine temper had become much acidulated by recent events, demanded, with a scornful sneer, what experience the "gal" had of masculine lips; and mamma, not to be behind the rest, remarked, with a side-glance at irascible Smith, that to her Fred had seemed too nice to be a man.

This naturally provoked the rejoinder, "Handsome is as handsome does," coupled with a little feeble satire on the nicety of young women dressing up in breeches, and the discussion terminated with a sapient remark from Deborah that perhaps, after all, Nelly might be already Fred's wife, which brought them *en bloc* to their bearings. How painfully awkward if it should subsequently ooze out that the entire family had swallowed a *canard* concerning the sex of Nelly's husband. For the nonce one and all dried up. The next post, however, brought another letter from Cheltenham, as thus :

Cheltenham, August 28th, 1860.

Sir,—Since I wrote to you yesterday my sister Tozer informs me that she has received a letter from her daughter stating that they are now at Moulton, four miles from Northampton. From this information you can have no difficulty in finding them, and in so doing we are all of an opinion, from their straightforward letter and entire absence of any information which would in the least condemn them, that your daughter cannot be in their company.

I do hope and trust, for the sake of all parties, that you will find such to be the case.

I am, sir,
Yours obediently,
S. Coombe.

"Gim me my 'at, wife!" growled old Smith.
"What be going to do, John?"

"Why, larn the truth, the 'ole truth and nothink but the truth," shouted the farmer *fortissimo*.

"But when be you a-comin' home again? And, John, don't 'ee be obstreperous. That there painter chap's a better man nor thee."

"Be he?" muttered John Smith between his teeth, as he rose to depart, flushed with divine wrath.

"And, John," with a whimper, "you won't go to be hard upon our Nelly!"

"Not me, wife. If I didn't love the gal, I wouldn't step across this floo'oor arter her."

"Bless 'ee, John," sobbed the fond mother. "Bring the pore thing home whatever happens."

"But," said Deborah, the sceptic, "suppose she bain't there at all?"

"Why then," shouted John, "I'll know the reason why. Don't you make no error, none of you. That painter shall produce my daughter, or I'll throttle the rogue—that I will!"

"John!" shrieked his wife, following him outside the house, "those be foolish words. Leave the law to settle with the pair of 'em. They'll get worse in gaol nor you could give 'em."

"Trust my old head for that," was the quiet rejoinder.

"And, John dear, you won't do nothing without the police? There's no saying what mightn't happen if you was to fall into the hands of such rascals."

"No, no!" bellowed the old farmer, "I know my business better nor that. Catch your 'are first and cook 'un arterwards. Good-bye till you sees me agin."

The wife's bit of advice I regard as a fair sample of woman's wit. In their own case the sex tempers prudence with passion; where others are concerned the reverse process commends itself to their intelligence. Now Mr. John Smith was just in that red-hot sort of mood which prompts foolhardiness to run its neck into a noose; and although I give Tom Coombe credit for being the harmless tool of an eccentric wife, still, if driven to bay, he might have turned nasty. People very much in the wrong are quick to assume the aggressive. Anyhow, the course suggested insured against all possible risks.

That evening, about supper-time, a police inspector from Northampton, accompanied by Mr. John Smith and a brace of stalwart gentlemen in blue, knocked at the humble residence of Mrs. Whiting, in the peaceful village of Moulton.

"Parties of the name of Coombe lodging here?"

Mrs. Whiting's eye dilated as she returned an affirmative. What was up ?

" Man and wife ? "

" No, sir, the father and his boy, and a young lady as is the boy's sweet'eart."

" Respectably behaved ? "

" Oh, yes, pays for everything reg'elar."

To one of the constables. " Just step through, Williams, and guard the back. You, Timins, stop where you are. Now, sir," to Mr. Smith, " we'd best identify the parties. You go first." The dialogue passed with professional celerity, and was conducted *sotto voce*, so that the only intimation the Coombes received of Mr. Smith's arrival under escort was by the parlour door opening stealthily.

Tom Coombe was seated at the table, blowing a cloud of tobacco and immersed in the police intelligence of a local paper. Fred and Nelly occupied the sofa, the head of the latter gracefully reclining on the shoulder of the former—an effective pose.

" Mr. Smith ! " gasped Fred, turning ashen.

" Father, dear. I'm so glad to—— " and then little Nelly's voice failed. She felt guilty.

Tableau.

" Stop, girl," gurgled poor old Smith in tones half-suffocated by emotion. " No, Coombe, I ain't agoing to shake hands with the likes o' you. Inspector, please step inside. You may be wanted."

The Coombes exchanged glances. The apparition of an officer in blue needed no explanation. As for Nelly, appalled by the fierce expression of her father's face, terrified still more by the awe-inspiring *vindex* of law, she clung convulsively to Fred—her Fred for the last time, though she did not guess it.

" Now," said Mr. Smith, turning savagely on his child's lover, whose features had already assumed a brazen expression, " when you've done messing about my daughter perhaps you'll read this," flinging old Mrs. Coombe's letter on the table.

The androgyne took it up with a scornful *moue*, glanced at it, and pitched it back.

" What do you say to that, madam ? "

Nelly started. Madam ? What could father mean ?

" Is that true, or is it not ? What ! You won't answer, won't you ? Then perhaps you will, my man," turning upon Coombe. " We want to know, and we mean to know, whether that person there is a man or a woman, whether it is your son or your wife ? "

Nelly gave a little shriek, and drew away from Fred.

Tom took his pipe out of his mouth, cast an eagle stare on the inspector, and to this plain question returned a crooked answer, but not to his interrogator.

"You've done it, Kate; I always know'd you would. Make the best of a bad job if you can."

Nelly sprang from the sofa as if she had been hit in the wing by a charge of buck shot. In a trice the poor little thing had flung her arms round her father's neck, and, amid a cascade of tears and a tornado of hysterical sobs, the listening inspector caught and treasured such ejaculations as: "It wasn't my fault, dear father, indeed it wasn't! He, she, forced me to do it! Oh, do forgive me!"

I am of opinion that sweet innocence, supposing herself to be the culprit, imagined that she was to be haled off to prison at the instance of a stern parent. No doubt remorse mingled with fright, and the two produced incipient hysteria.

It was now Kate's turn.

With perfect sang-froid she remarked, "I really don't understand what all this is about."

Old Smith, in whose eyes and voice tears trembled, so overjoyed was he at recovering his daughter, felt unequal to pinning the snake now that he had her at his mercy; so he whispered to the inspector, "Tell her, will you?"

That functionary stood forward. "You confess," he observed, in the unemotional tone of judicial severity, "to being the wife of that man there—Coombe?"

Fred nodded, with an amused look, as though it were all the hugest of jokes—even poor Nelly's horror and agony.

"And by personating a man you have abducted this gentleman's daughter, she being under age, without his knowledge or consent?"

"That's a lie. She came of her own free will—didn't you, Nelly, dear?"

Nelly, dear, turning her streaming face, administered such a look as pierced the hussy's triple brass. Not a syllable escaped the child's lips, but if ever eyes spoke, hers said, "You have tricked me cruelly, and I hate you!"

"The young lady makes no admission," observed the inspector. "If she did, it wouldn't signify. You must come along with me."

"Mayn't I change my things?" pleaded Madam Kate.

But authority was inexorable. The make-up constituted

the prime feature in the indictment. They marched her off then and there to Northampton gaol.

So the romance ended in bathos.

* * * * * *

At this point of the narrative my theory of Madam Kate Coombe's escapade being due to an eccentricity of the emotional system rather than to gross criminality, receives a slight shock. Why, it may be asked, should the mask fall off her face in a half-second ? Why should the flood of affection which professed to be stronger than death evaporate in a single faltered " dear " —a feeble appeal for the support of her victim ? Wherefore the total absence of distress ?

Answer : There is no knowing what anyone will do—male or female—if thoroughly startled. They manage these situations better on the stage than in real life. Why ? Because they are at the pains to preserve the unities, whereas in plain homespun existence the players perpetually violate them. Bishops, it may be, don't dance breakdowns in public, but they have been known to stupefy themselves with opium, make love to their cooks, and otherwise jumble an exalted *rôle* with that of the low-comedy man. Now, on the truest and best-defined principles of dramatic art, Kate when brought to bay ought to have fallen on her knees before Nelly, hugged her, covered her reluctant hand with kisses, and insisted on being torn like the limpet from the rock, by the main force of Mr. Inspector.

Instead, her instinct told her the game was up, that it would be vain to piece a shattered idol, that the chances were strongly in favour of her having to pay dearly for this amusing and exciting game, that the epoch of foolery was ended and that of stern reality had commenced. There you have the clue to Kate.

I cannot ask anyone of either sex to put another self in her place. Neither can I change the logic of fact. All I dare urge is that this woman's sudden change of attitude may be reconcilable with moral weakness, but does not inevitably imply moral obliquity of the carnal type.

Further, because in the dread presence of an injured father, a police-officer, who had already adopted a theory of abduction, and, above all, of the poor, pretty thing she had duped, the exaggerated lingo of passion dropped like a hot potato out of her foolish mouth, it must not be taken as a *sequitur* that all the love she chattered and scribbled was sheer sham.

After probing the matter to the core, I am satisfied that Kate

fell in love with Nelly, and that this morbid passion dominated her whole being, impelling a course of deception, and occasionally rendering life a burden. Throughout the affair she was obsessed, and detection alone brought with it the dawn of common sense. I have little doubt that, face to face with the policeman, she suddenly awakened to a consciousness of her unutterable baseness. It was too late then to come to terms with the adversary; but conscience makes cowards of us all, and cowardice led her to justify herself—or try to do so—at Nelly's expense. The jade did not strut like a tragedy queen, being nothing of the kind, but, as the wife of a journeyman painter, she played her natural *rôle*.

So they bundled off Frederick with the damning evidence upon her of what are termed in the trade "trouserings," to Northampton lock-up, and Nelly's papa, too grateful to hazard a syllable of reproach, bore off his treasure in triumph. Not that there was much occasion to doubt the poor little girl. A scourge of small cords could not have lacerated her so terribly. Girls, like flowers, are fragile things. Once rub off the bloom and they fade. No member of the tougher and less sensitive sex by the wildest flight of imagination can conceive the feelings of a maid thus brutally played with and betrayed. She, too, had loved. She had built sweet sunshine castles in the air, to be inhabited by herself and her Fred. The world of work and worry under a spell of romance had changed to delirious happiness and divine beauty. Even straw-plaiting had seemed lovely, for it enabled her to think of him—bah, I mean "her"—her idol, her demigod, her deity. They say the horse yields us obedience because to the equine eye a little whipper-snapper jockey appears a giant. Even so the maiden under the spell of love idealises a commonplace, nasty brute, until by this magnifying process he becomes rather superior to most archangels, and many cuts above gentlemen ten thousand-fold his betters in mind, body and estate. There is no limit to illusion. Titania fondles an ass, and the wives of drunkards excel all others in devotion. There must surely be some kind of flaw in the feminine iris, a variety of colour-blindness, or these amazing errors would cease to be repeated from generation to generation.

The home-coming to the Bedfordshire village may prove instructive to the student of character. Sam, with brotherly exuberance, bellowed, "Here she is!" Lizzie met her sister with a frigid "Well, Nelly," verbiage being at a premium where ideas are scarce. Mamma pulled the visage of the stern Roman matron, and in an unnatural contralto remarked

severely, "I don't know whether I ought to kiss you, Nelly, but——"

But she did, maternal intuition rising above a pedantic sense of propriety, and to give the lie to her icy speech the kiss was gone through *da capo* with mordacious vehemence, accentuated by a twitch of the classic mouth, and one or two large specimens of that most precious of all jewels—the real tear.

Lastly, Deborah stole up and whispered, "I took your part, miss, I did," ministered the sort of sounding smack usually reserved for Lubin, the ploughboy, after chapel on Sunday nights, and then retired with the corner of her apron in her eye to whimper. After all, I am of opinion that Deborah exhibited as good a sample of human nature as any one of the lot. But, then, being only a servant, she had no shoddy pride.

Having thus one and all done their part, as they conceived, they waited for Nelly to do hers. What did they expect, you ask? What would the unities entail? Say a fit of hysterics? Say a speech of the "Friends, Romans, countrymen" variety? Say a little posturing, or even the mild excitement of a dead faint? Say, a mouthful of apologies, excuses, platitudes, fetched up by that type of pert assurance which induces jilted maidenhood to declare, with a merry laugh showing all its gums, that there are as good fish in the sea as out of it? Fred might be a fiasco, but *manet* Tom, Dick and Harry, adorned with the bristles of a toothbrush and other outward and visible signs of uncompromising masculinity?

If they expected an item of this programme, disappointment awaited them. Nelly disdained hysterics, said nothing, kissed nobody, forgot to faint, and—as Sam put it—*took no notice*. That was just it. The poor thing walked into the dear old home minus smile, minus tear, accepted rebuke and caress alike with the frigidity of marble, seemed in a dream, dazed, stunned, a shell without a kernel, a lute with a broken string.

Never was so awkward a silence. The stupid idiots lacked the warmth of sympathy, which would have made them surround her, cuddle her, shake her out of herself, and force her to feel the sincerity of their love and welcome. Not a bit of it. She had made them the talk of the neighbourhood, and this in bucolic eyes amounted to a crime. They were honestly glad to have her back—saved from what might have been, had Kate been a worse woman, imminent ruin—yet a little hipped at the affair. So they permitted the infinitesimal hip to swamp the glorious joy. Fools!

At last this oppressive silence was broken abruptly by

Master Sam with "I say, what a mess you've made of it, Nell!" Nelly gazed at the accuser and her lip quivered. That was all.

"Now, my lad," quoth the farmer, a man to the core, if rather a dull one, "jest you shut up. Don't kick people who are down. You may do as bad, or worse, and when that happens I give you my word in your father's house you shall find a bit of sympathy. Mother, give Nelly a cup of tea. She's been hard hit."

"No, thank you, Father."

"But I say, yes, Nell. You do as you're bid."

And she did, mechanically. The generous fluid brought no tint to her lips.

"The poor thing's ill," whispered her mother, and she was right.

Avoid pitying the little girl, if you can. For myself, I honestly avow that never have I met a case so meet for compassion. He that steals a maiden's purse steals trash, but he that steals her heart takes that which does him no good and leaves her poor indeed!—a not unpardonable travesty, I trust.

Old Smith had arranged with the Northampton inspector to apply for a remand in order that Kate Coombe's antecedents might be inquired into. This delay gave little Nelly the chance of partially recovering from the crash of a hideous revelation, a chance of which she was, unfortunately, unable to avail herself.

"Fair gravelled the gal is," commented her father, as he gazed on a bloodless face and dull drooping eyes.

"Nelly," said he at length, "this won't do at all. Fretting yourself to death you are. You won't be fit to face the magistrates at Northampton."

"Father," pleaded Nelly, "I wish I could escape all that. Let her go. I don't want her to be punished."

John Smith's face hardened. "I believe you're a-hankerin' arter the critter," he blurted reproachfully.

"Father, how can you!"

"Then what's your meanin', gal?"

"Nothing more than that I feel ill, that I would rather not set eyes on that—that person again, that his—*her* disgrace won't help me."

"Very likely not," snapped John; "but what about your character? It's at stake."

The girl shook her head.

"Let them say and think what they like, Father. I'm nowise to blame except in hiding from you, and that would not have been if I had had a stamp to send you a letter."

"Then, Nelly, for the sake of your good name you ought to speak up."

"My name is nothing to me, father. It's gone."

"Nonsense. Besides, if you don't value it, 'tis the name we all bears, and for our sakes——"

"If you put it so," interposed Nelly with sudden animation, "I will go through with it, painful as it will be. I owe you all the amends I can make."

"There spoke my own little Nelly," cried the farmer. "I bain't revengeful, but when I claps eyes on my daughter's cheeks with never a rose upon 'em, I thinks, I does, that the rascal as done that ought to be punished."

"I'd rather she was left alone," murmured Nelly, "but it shall be as you wish."

So the injured child travelled with old Smith to Northampton, and in due course the prisoner Kate, *alias* Frederick, Coombes, was arraigned on the only charge the statute would permit, that of vagrancy.

A less vagrom person could scarcely be pictured. Kate had pulled her wits together, smartened her masculine attire, and looked every inch a pretty fellow for a maid to pitch her heart at. Her black hair had grown longish in front, and this, falling over her forehead, imparted rather an epicene touch, but she might easily have been mistaken for a boy in his teens, and was no more feminine than are half the chorister boys of the cathedrals.

She smiled at Nelly, perhaps because the girl refused even to glance at her, nodded familiarly to her husband, and seemed perfectly at her ease. I take it her shrewd intelligence had totted up the pros and cons. She knew exactly what could be brought home to her, but that was not abduction, nor, unless the magistrates elected to convict on a false issue, vagrancy. A journeyman painter of either sex is no vagrant, and however much locomotion on Shanks's mare may transgress the statutes at large, locomutation may be performed minus criminal liability.

In Kate you may recognise a consummate hypocrite—Greek for actress, which again is Latin for player. Knowing the type as I do by heart a caveat must be entered against the vulgar sophism, because a woman can act, she therefore gives ocular evidence of having no heart. The poetaster Bunn has attained

immortality by a more than Irish mixture of metaphors in his line

When hollow hearts shall wear a mask,

and you won't be far out in suspecting that in coupling heartlessness with the player's mask he was simply following the multitude to do a foul wrong to a not ignoble profession. It is not only possible for a woman who acts to be gifted with the most exalted sensibility, but—*teste* common sense—it amounts to half her stock-in-trade. Your Laodicean parson whose belief never rises beyond tepidity may homilise with the grace of Addison, but he cannot *preach*. Your loveless female may simulate, but to act she must feel. Kate could act with *aplomb* and well up to her audience, for she had brains of her own and good ones. She could face with a fortitude akin to heroism the very falsest of all false positions. But this faculty by no means proves her to have been hollow all through. Far from it, as the sequel amply demonstrated.

The case was opened by Mr. Smyth, the attorney representing Nelly and her father, who, after giving the regulation résumé of the facts, called the latter as a witness.

Now, as you may imagine, the old farmer was bubbling with indignation and half-asphyxiated with emotion. If anything under the sun could rile—the appropriate American verb—a gentleman who had been put to untold trouble, anxiety and expense, it was the jaunty pose of the prisoner, who twirled her natty little boy's cap, stood on one leg, and looked ten thousand defiances. This put the good man on his mettle. Addressing the magistrates in the expressive homespun of Arcadia, he told the tale of his own and his wife's apprehensions, of the fool's errand whereunto he had been allured by the false address, of the dread of nameless evil, of the suspicion still inherent in his mind of the ultimate intention of the little game, though he added in the prisoner's favour that no harm had actually happened whatever might have been in contemplation, winding up with a pathetic reference to his own feelings and an appeal to the fathers on the bench to put themselves in the place of an injured parent.

Then he ran down, and, turning to wither the prisoner, was startled to perceive that her swagger had vanished. Kate, the actress, was a woman, and, if you believe me, crying. Not idle tears, oh no—genuine; for, sex apart, she was only twenty-three. Not quite a matron, and far from case-hardened. On the contrary, like many another Romantic,

she was foolishly soft-hearted. The Bench noted those tears and were a trifle mollified.

But Lawyer Smyth, like a good advocate, would not permit his case to be prejudiced.

"It's all very fine for the prisoner to resort to these crocodiles," quo' he (laughter at Kate's expense), "but I think when your worships read these letters, these abominable letters designed to play upon the holiest affections of an innocent girl, you will appreciate that piece of hypocrisy at its proper worth."

So Kate's amatory effusions were handed up to the Bench, and the woman herself, stung by the lawyer's taunt, dried her eyes and prepared to do battle.

The magistrates—county, not borough justices, of course, Kate having been apprehended at Moulton—were Messrs. J. and H. O. Nethercoat, Bevan, and General Bouverie. Mr. John Nethercoat acted as chairman, and, being the squire of Moulton, was probably already in possession of what was really a leading fact in the case—viz., that the conduct of the Coombes in relation to Nelly Smith during their residence at Mrs. Whiting's cottage had been in every particular exemplary. This may have proved lucky for Mrs. Kate, inasmuch as the effect produced by the correspondence was well-nigh galvanic. The Bench startled out of its propriety, now tittered, now frowned, now muttered ejaculations expressive of proper indignation. The affair had obviously far transcended mere hoax. To the judicial mind, accustomed to light upon a criminal motive at every turn, there was an emphatically ugly look about it, and the police, whose especial business it is to secure convictions, rightly or wrongly, adroitly strengthened that impression. "What could have been the woman's motive in writing the stuff?" whispered one side of the Bench to the other. *Omne ignotum pro magnifico.* Human beings, not authors or other ink-slingers, seldom or never waste paper, postage-stamps, envelopes, pens and ink in providing folios for pork chops and spills to light pipes. You assume that letters—even love-letters—are not merely exercises in amatory composition, experiments, useless vivisections. *Ergo*, the Bench composed its broad grins, and in the interests of justice assumed a blackish look.

This was intensified when Mr. Inspector went into the box, and in the arid fashion of his tribe detailed how from information he had received—Robert has ever a prompter behind the scenes, occasionally called Harris—he proceeded to Moulton in company of the witness Smith, and, having discovered the parties, captured Kate.

Asked his opinion, this gentleman stated, *bouche ouverte*, that he had no doubt it was a case of abduction. Fortunately, detection had ensued, or the consequences might have been too horrible to be imagined. Asked further concerning the prisoner's antecedents, he shook his head and hazarded a hazy hint that they were none too beautiful. Still, he could allege nothing specific, not even a previous conviction.

The Bench: "Prisoner's relations seem to be people in a respectable position."

Inspector: "We don't know nothing to the contrary, your worship."

The Bench: "They have acted in the best of faith."

Inspector gloomed silently. It dawned on his mind that the case was going the other way.

Mr. Smyth: "That is my case, your worships."

The Bench (addressing that gentleman): "Are we to understand that you do not call the girl, Ellen Smith?"

Mr. Smyth: "I must leave that to the Court. In the exercise of my discretion I have not thought proper to do so. The young lady is here, but I understand her nerves have suffered under the shock of these extraordinary and distressing circumstances, and—and——"

The Bench: "Very good, Mr. Smyth, that is for you to say."

In other words Mr. Smyth had cleverly cooked his own goose. In this country verdicts are obtained by *evidence*, and nothing more or less than that. But witnesses, the imparters of evidence, are put into the box, or withheld, according to the effect they, or their testimony, would have upon the balances of justice. Counsel behind the scenes—*i.e.*, before a trial commences—decides from the bulk of evidence at his disposal which witnesses are inevitable, which may be trotted out, and, above all, which can stand cross-examination. When, therefore, counsel keeps back a principal, who ought *a priori* to be called, he prejudices his case, and the Court knows well enough he would not do this save to avoid the risk of utter collapse. Further, the principal witness is always the dangerous one, always *the* witness who may turn the tables. Hence, when counsel deliberately funks calling his principal witness, he administers the "happy despatch" to his case.

Here the principal was not Mr. Smith, who assumed that *rôle*, not Mrs. Whiting, not the Inspector, not even the documents, damning though their evidence appeared to be—on the surface—but, if you please, little Nelly Smith; and her father

had implored with creditable weakness that she might be spared torture and the Court a harrowing scene.

The lawyer yielded, possibly against his judgment. But the Bench, being wideawake, took note of the fact and transferred its bias to the other side; indeed, they could hardly do otherwise. A Cockburn or a Lush, I dare swear, would have stopped the case then and there—high-handed perhaps, yet not inconsistent with precedent.

The prosecution having thus exhausted its energies, and the prisoner being undefended, the Chairman of the Bench, Mr. Nethercoat, intimated to her that they would be glad to hear what she had to say. Now there are ladies who, if accorded the rare luxury of haranguing a Court of Justice, would straightway pour forth a volume of irrelevant verbiage for the space of several hours. According to these fair creatures, man, *i.e.*, the male of the species (not its female by any manner of means) is a listening animal. It wasn't altogether to Kate's discredit that ambition in her case proved modest. Oddly enough for a woman (perhaps she may have been surreptitiously influenced by association with masculine understandings), she shot straight at the gold, and hit it too in the very centre. Assuming an air of inimitable nonchalance, and riveting her eye on old John Smith, who with downcast and tremulous little Nelly was seated slightly to the right of where she stood, says she:

"This charge rests on the allegation of that man," with a wave of her hand in the direction of Smith *père*. "He tells you I decoyed his daughter. That is not so. She came away from Bedford with us of her own free will."

"Yes, yes," interposed Mr. Nethercoat, "but the letters imply undue influence on your part."

"The letters," remarked Mr. Smyth, "constitute in themselves a clinching proof of intention on the part of the prisoner, and I submit to the Court, that, viewing her conduct in the most lenient light, and admitting for the sake of argument an absence of criminal action, whatever the ulterior motive may have been, her behaviour has been so insanely ridiculous that she ought to be placed in a lunatic asylum." (Applause.)

Kate: "Ridiculous! Of course it was all very ridiculous, but I did not abduct Ellen Smith away. She came of her own free will and she dare not contradict me. Why has she not been examined as a witness? There she stands, and your worships can question her."

Nelly drew back, and clung tight to her father's arm. The poor child shrank from an ordeal, for which she appeared

physically unfit. A glance revealed the truth to humane Squire Nethercoat. He saw why the girl had not been called, and consequently replied sharply to Kate:

"It is quite unnecessary. We have heard enough."

The room was then cleared, and the magistrates consulted with their clerk and legal adviser.

On the doors being reopened, Mr. Nethercoat delivered the decision of the Bench. "We find," he said, "that this is a case beyond our jurisdiction, the offence of abducting, if committed at all, having taken place at Bedford. The prisoner deserves punishment for her cruel and deceitful conduct, and in this we regard her husband as an accomplice. We recommend you, however" (addressing Mr. Smith) "to seek your remedy in a civil court. You have an undeniable claim for damages on account of the loss of your daughter's services, and the expenses incurred, and we trust you will punish these people in the way they will feel most acutely—namely, through their pockets. I desire to add publicly that although the relations between your daughter and this man and woman were to all outward appearances equivocal, the evidence of Mrs. Whiting goes to prove that there was no misbehaviour on either side, and we are glad to be able to congratulate you on your daughter's character having been thoroughly vindicated. The prisoner is discharged."

"Thank your worship," shouted old John Smith after the retreating magistrate. "But I bain't agoin' to throw good money arter bad. Let the slut go!"

So the said "slut" went, protected by Tom Coombe, who, I am bound to confess, played the man right manfully, against a hissing, hooting, jeering, vicious flock of Northampton lambs. Tom and the police at last got her clear, and the pair disappeared. It was subsequent to these events that I ferreted them out with the kind assistance of Mr. Nethercoat, hence if in the foregoing statement there should be any error, it must be set down to the score of second-hand information, and not to wilful garbling on my part. My main facts were derived from Mr. Nethercoat, Kate herself, and Mrs. Whiting, a good soul whose tale I designed to commit to paper at once, but omitted to do so. The opinion I formed of Kate was by no means altogether unfavourable. N.B.—She was inflated with crinoline when I set eyes upon her, but at my request extracted her masculine properties from the recesses of her wardrobe. A tall, straight, graceful creature with fine features, intelligence to match, a little spice of fourth-rate

education, just enough to interest her mind in fiction of the transpontine sort, as much of eccentricity as to offer a mild apology for the outline, though scarcely for the details of her escapade, a total absence of ordinary feminine instincts, though not I opine of modesty—indeed, I accredited her, in spite of a preference for trousers, with downright prudishness—and a total indifference towards unlucky Tom Coombe, who seemed tied to the tail of a meteor. There you have the silhouette of an odd, unnatural, but by no means uninteresting woman.

Asked if she was really attached to Nelly she replied, "Dearly, truly!"

Asked if she was not ashamed of the injury she had done that poor little thing, "I have suffered too," she said. "It will take me a long time to get over it."

Asked if she was sincerely sorry for Mr. Smith, she admitted that he was a "kind old man." "But he need not have turned spiteful," she added.

Asked her motive for adopting male attire, her eyes flashed and her tongue began to wag. "You want to know," she cried, "the origin of all this mischief? I answer—the injustice of man. Women's labour is shamefully underpaid. To get fair wages, I put on the breeches. That I was not found out by inferior work shows that to refuse me a man's wage because I wore a petticoat was a real injustice."

Asked to analyse her feelings respecting Nelly Smith during the progress of their love affair, a tear started to her eye, and she pondered for a moment, then she rapped out flippantly, "Well, I suppose the girl supplied a certain want to a childless woman's heart. Perhaps I craved for something to cuddle and cherish, and pet and look down upon. You see, I am accustomed to look up to my husband."

That last avowal may possibly have been a sarcasm.

Asked what must be the feelings of a girl who finds the man she is deeply in love with is a woman, and whether she imagined that the bare discovery could cure a passion which had matured into a habit, she sobbed hysterically, "Don't torture me. I know well enough what happened. When Nelly was told the truth I became hateful to her."

"She revolted from you?"

"Yes."

"What else could you expect?"

"What, indeed!" (Tears.) "I wish I had let her into the secret. We might have been friends now."

That is the story from prologue to climax. It needs only

a real male lover, jilted in favour of Kate, to impart the essentials of a comedy of errors. In its existing form it might be described as serious farce, but for the anti-climax, which was no laughing matter.

Perhaps you will surmise that Nelly Smith pined and died. Sixteen is an age implete with recuperative vigour. I believe she got over it.

No, it was not the victim but the victimiser who met with poetical justice. History records of Madame Laffarge that, after a storm of passion and despair, she became suddenly calm, and took to *câlinerie*. Hard as nails in court, she transformed herself into an affectionate wife and is said to have died of a broken heart.

That, so I learnt subsequently from a gentleman who interested himself in this strange woman, was the end of the girl called Fred, who brazened it unblushingly before the Northamptonshire magistrates. You will judge, therefore, whether I was very far wrong in rating her as a poet rather than as a scoundrel. I don't doubt that the proper place for many poets may be an asylum, but not, if you please, a gaol.

Besides, an epoch which has invented the divided skirt need not be too severe on androgynism. Sexes, like classes, have a tendency to fuse and borrow each other's *differentia*. Fred's short hair in 1860 was an outrage, and the lambs of Shoeborough told her so. In 1883 the Kates one meets are cropped *à la militaire*, and parade with gold-headed sticks like bedells. The sex is following Fred to do evil, and at the rate of progress androgynism is making, the table of affinity will soon have to be enlarged by the addition of the prohibitive enactment, " A woman may not marry her grandmother."

Watling Street : A Memory

By Arnold Bennett

Upon an evening in early autumn, I, who had never owned an orchard before, stood in my orchard; behind me were a phalanx of some sixty trees bearing (miraculously, to my simplicity) a fine crop of apples and plums—my apples and plums, and a mead of some two acres, my mead, upon which I discerned possibilities of football and cricket; behind these was a double greenhouse containing three hundred pendent bunches of grapes of the dark and aristocratic variety which I thought I had seen in Piccadilly ticketed at four shillings a pound—my grapes; still further behind uprose the chimneys of a country-house, uncompromisingly plain and to some eyes perhaps ugly, but my country-house, the lease of which, stamped, was in my pocket. Immediately in front of me was a luxuriant hedge which, long unclipped, had attained a height of at least fifteen feet. Beyond the hedge the ground fell away sharply into a draining ditch, and on the other side of the ditch, through the interstices of the hedge, I perceived glimpses of a very straight and very white highway.

This highway was Watling Street, built of the Romans, and even now surviving as the most famous road in England. I had "learnt" it at school, and knew that it once ran from Dover to London, from London to Chester, and from Chester to York. Just recently I had tracked it diligently on a series of county maps, and discovered that, though only vague fragments of it remained in Kent, Surrey, Shropshire, Cheshire, and Yorkshire, it still flourished and abounded exceedingly in my particular neighbourhood as a right line, austere, renowned, indispensable, clothed in its own immortal dust. I could see but patches of it in the twilight, but I was aware that it stretched fifteen miles south-east of me, and unnumbered miles north-west of me, with scarcely a curve to break the splendid inexorable monotony of its career. To me it was a wonderful road—more wonderful than the Great North Road, or the military road from Moscow to Vladivostock. And the most wonderful thing about it was that I lived on it. After all, few people can stamp the top of their notepaper, "Watling Street, England." It is not a residential thoroughfare.

Only persons of imagination can enter into my feelings at

that moment. I had spent two-thirds of my life in a town (squalid, industrial) and the remaining third in Town. I thought I knew every creosoted block in Fleet Street, every bookstall in Shoreditch, every hosier's in Piccadilly. I certainly did know the order of stations on the Inner Circle, the various frowns of publishers, the strange, hysteric, silly atmosphere of theatrical first-nights, the stars of the Empire and Alhambra (by sight), and the vicious odours of a thousand and one restaurants. And lo! burdened with all this accumulated knowledge, shackled by all these habits, associations, entrancements, I was yet moved by some mysterious and far-off atavism to pack up, harness the oxen, "trek," and go and live in "the country." Of course, I soon discovered that there is no such thing as "the country," just as there is no such thing as Herbert Spencer's "state." "The country" is an entity which exists only in the brains of an urban population, whose members ridiculously regard the terrene surface as a concatenation of towns surrounded by earthy space. There is England, and there are spots on England called towns: that is all. But at that time I, too, had the illusion of "the country," a district where one saw "trees," "flowers," and "birds." For me, a tree was not an oak, nor an ash, nor an elm, nor a birch, nor a chestnut; it was just a "tree." For me there were robins, sparrows, and crows; the rest of the winged fauna were merely "birds." I recognised roses, daisies, dandelions, forget-me-nots, chrysanthemums, and one or two more blossoms; all else were "flowers." Remember that all this happened before the advent of the nature-book and the sublime invention of week-ending, and conceive me plunging into this unknown, inscrutable and recondite "country," as I might have plunged fully clothed and unable to swim into the sea. It was a prodigious adventure! When my friends asked me, with furtive glances at each other as in the presence of a lunatic, why I was going to live in the country, I could only reply: "Because I want to. I want to see what it's like." I might have attributed my action to the dearness of season-tickets on the Underground, to the slowness of omnibuses, or the danger of cabs: my friends would have been just as wise, and I just as foolish, in their esteem. I admit that their attitude of benevolent contempt, of far-seeing sagacity, gave me to think. And although I was obstinate, it was with a pang of misgiving that I posted the notice of quitting my suburban residence; and the pang was more acute when I signed the contract for the removal of my furniture. I called on my friends before the sinister day of exodus.

"Good-bye," I said.

"Au revoir," they replied, with calm vaticinatory assurance. "We shall see you back again in a year."

Thus, outwardly braggart, inwardly quaking, I departed. The quaking had not ceased as I stood, in the autumn twilight, in my beautiful orchard, in front of my country-house. Toiling up the slope from the southward, I saw an enormous van with three horses: the last instalment of my chattels. As it turned lumberingly at right angles into my private road or *boreen*, I said aloud:

"I've done it."

I had. I felt like a statesman who has handed an ultimatum to a king's messenger. No withdrawal was now possible. From the reverie natural to this melancholy occasion I was aroused by a disconcerting sound of collision, the rattle of chains, and the oaths customary to drivers in a difficulty. I ran towards the house and down the weedy drive bordered by trees, which a learned gardener had told me were of the variety *cupressus lawsoniana*. In essaying the perilous manœuvre of twisting round three horses and a long van in a space about twenty feet square, the driver had overset the brick pier upon which swung my garden-gate. The unicorn horse of the team was nosing at the *cupressus lawsoniana* and the van was scotched in the gateway. I thought: "This is an omen." I was, however, reassured by the sight of two butchers and two bakers, each asseverating that nothing could afford him greater pleasure than to call every day for orders. A minute later the postman, in his own lordly equipage, arrived with my newspapers and his respects. I tore open a paper and read news of London. I convinced myself that London actually existed, though I were never to see it again. The smashing of the pier dwindled from a catastrophe to an episode.

The next morning very early I was in Watling Street. Since then,

> Full many a glorious morning have I seen
> Flatter the mountain tops with sovereign eye.

But this was the first in the sequence of those Shakespearean mornings, and it was also, subjectively, the finest. I shall not describe it, since, objectively and in the quietude of hard fact, I now perceive that it could not have been in the least remarkable. The sun rose over the southward range which Bunyan took for the model of his Delectable Mountains, and forty or fifty square miles of diversified land was spread out in front of me. The road cut down for a couple of miles like a geometri-

cian's rule, and disappeared in a slight "S" curve, the work of a modern generation afraid of gradients, on to the other side of the Delectable Mountains. I thought: "How magnificent were those Romans in their disregard of everything except direction!" And being a professional novelist I naturally began at once to consider the possibilities of exploiting Watling Street in fiction. Then I climbed to the brow of my own hill, whence, at the foot of the long northerly slope, I could descry the outposts of my village, a mile away; there was no habitation of mankind nearer to me than this picturesque and venerable hamlet, which seemed to lie inconsiderable on the great road like a piece of paper. The seventy-four telegraph wires which border the great road run above the roofs of Winghurst as if they were unaware of its existence. "And Winghurst," I reflected, "is henceforth my metropolis." No office! No memorising of time-tables! No daily struggle-for-lunch! Winghurst, with three hundred inhabitants, the centre of excitement, the fount of external life!

The course of these ordinary but inevitable thoughts was interrupted by my consciousness of a presence near me. A man coughed. He had approached me, in almost sole-less boots, on the grassy footpath. For a brief second I regarded him with that peculiar fellow-feeling which a man who has risen extremely early is wont to exhibit towards another man who has risen extremely early. But finding no answering vanity in his undistinguished features I quickly put on an appearance of usualness, to indicate that I might be found on that spot at that hour every morning. The man looked shabby, and that Sherlock Holmes who lies concealed in each one of us decided for me that he must be a tailor out of work.

"Good morning, sir," he said.

"Good morning," I said.

"Do you want to buy a good recipe for a horse, sir?" he asked.

"A horse?" I repeated, wondering whether he was a lunatic, or a genius who had discovered a way to manufacture horses.

"Yes, sir," he said. "They often fall sick, sir, you know. The saying is, as I dare say you've heard, 'Never trust a woman's word or a horse's health.'"

I corrected his quotation.

"I've got one or two real good recipes," he resumed.

"But I've got no horse," I replied, and that seemed to finish the interview.

"No offence, I hope, sir," he said, and passed on towards the Delectable Mountains.

He was a mystery; his speech disclosed no marked local accent; he had certainly had some education; and he was hawking horse-remedies in Watling Street at sunrise. Here was the germ of my first lesson in rusticity. Except in towns, the "horsey" man does not necessarily look horsey. That particular man resembled a tailor, and by a curious coincidence the man most fearfully and wonderfully learned in equine lore that I have yet known is a tailor.

But horses! Six miles away to the west I could see the steam of expresses on the London and North-Western main line; four miles to the east I could see the steam of expresses on the Midland. And here was an individual offering stable-recipes as simply as though they had been muffins! I reflected on my empty stable, harness-room, coach-house. I began to suspect that I was in a land where horses entered into the daily and hourly existence of the people. I had known for weeks that I must buy a horse; the nearest town and the nearest railway station were three miles off. But now, with apprehension, I saw that mysterious and dangerous mercantile operation to be dreadfully imminent: me, *coram publico*, buying a horse, me the dupe of copers, me a butt for the covert sarcasm of a village omniscient about horses and intolerant of ignorance on such a subject! . . .

Down in the village, that early morning, I saw a pony and an evidently precarious trap standing in front of the principal shop. I had read about the "village-shop" in novels; I had even ventured to describe it in fiction of my own; and I was equally surprised and delighted to find that the village-shop of fiction was also the village-shop of fact. It was the mere truth that one could buy everything in this diminutive emporium, that the multifariousness of its odours excelled that of the odours of Cologne, and that the proprietor, who had never seen me before, instantly knew me and all about me. Soon I was in a fair way to know something of the proprietor. He was informing me that he had five little children, when one of the five, snuffling and in a critical mood, tumbled into the shop out of an obscure Beyond.

"And what's your name?" I inquired of the girl, with that fatuous, false blandness of tone which the inexpert always adopt toward children. I thought of the five maidens whose names were five sweet symphonies, and, moreover, I deemed it politic to establish friendly relations with my monopolist.

"She's a little shy," I remarked.

"It's a boy, sir," said the monopolist.

It occurred to me that Nature was singularly uninventive in devising new quandaries for the foolish.

"Tell the gentleman your name."

Thus admonished, the boy emitted one monosyllable: "Guy."

"We called him Guy because he was born on the fifth of November," the monopolist was good enough to explain.

As I left the shop a man driving a pony drew up at the door with an immense and sudden flourish calculated to impress the simple. I noticed that the pony was the same animal which I had previously seen standing there.

"Want to buy a pony, sir?" The question was thrown at me like a missile that narrowly escaped my head, launched in a voice which must once have been extremely powerful, but which now, whether by abuse of shouting in the open air or by the deteriorating effect of gin on the vocal chords, was only a loud, passionate whisper; so that, though the man obviously bawled with all his might, the drum of one's ear was not shattered. I judged, partly from the cut of his coat and the size of the buttons on it, and partly from the creaminess of the shaggy, long-tailed pony, that my questioner was or had been connected with circuses. His very hand was against him; the turned-back podgy thumb showed acquisitiveness, and the enormous Gophir diamonds in brass rings argued a certain lack of really fine taste. His face had literally the brazen look and that absolutely hard, impudent, glaring impassivity acquired only by those who earn more than enough to drink by continually bouncing the public.

"The finest pony in the county, sir." (It was an animal organism gingerly supported on four crooked legs—a quadruped and nothing more.) "The finest pony in the county!" he screamed. "Finest pony in England, sir! Not another like him! I took him to the Rothschild horse-show, but they wouldn't have him. Said I'd come too late to enter him for the first-clawss. They were afraid—afferaid! There was the water-jump. 'Stand aside you blighters,' I said, 'and he'll jump that, the d——d gig and all.' But they were afferaid!"

I asked if the animal was quiet to drive.

"Quiet to drive, sir, did you say? I should *say* so. I says, '*Away*,' and *off* he goes." Here the thin scream became a screech. "Then I says, '*Pull up, you blighter*,' and he stops dead. A child could drive him. He don't want no driving. You

could drive him with a silken thread." His voice melted, and with an exquisite tender cadence he repeated: "With a silk-en therredd!"

"Well," I said. "How much?"

"How much, did you say, sir? How much?" He made it appear that this question came upon him as an extraordinary surprise. I nodded.

He meditated on the startling problem, and then yelled: "Thirty guineas. It's giving him away."

"Make it shillings," I said. I was ingenuously satisfied with my retort, but the man somehow failed to appreciate it.

"Come here!" he said, in a tone of intimate confidence. "Come here! Listen! I've had that pony's picture painted. Finest artist in England, sir. And frame! You never see such a frame! At thirty guineas I'll throw the picture in. Look ye! That picture cost me two quid, and here's the receipt." He pulled forth a grimy paper, and I accepted it from his villainous fingers. It proved, however, to be a receipt for four pounds, and for the portrait, not of a pony, but of a man.

"This is a receipt for your own portrait," I said.

"Now wasn't that a coorious mistake for me to make?" he asked, as if demanding information. "Wasn't that a coorious mistake?"

I was obliged to give him the answer he desired, and then he produced the correct receipt.

"Now," he said wooingly. "There! Is it a trade? I'll bring you the picture to-night. Finest frame you ever saw! What? No? Look here, buy him at thirty guineas—say pounds—and I'll chuck you both the blighted pictures in!"

"*Away!*" he screamed a minute later, and the cream pony, galvanised into frantic activity by that sound, and surely not controllable by a silken thread, scurried off towards the Delectable Mountains.

This was my first insight into horse-dealing.

Letters of Wagner to his Schoolfellow, Apel

Translated by William Ashton Ellis

39

(*No outward address.*)

PARIS, *the 20th Sept.* 1840.

MY THEODOR,—In a situation you perhaps can't even form a notion of—and in which I regard myself as arrived at the extreme end of the direst mischances,—it is the friend of my youth, alas vanished, to whom I turn once more; to him who himself has been proved by sorest trials. To avoid any look of hypocrisy, I place at the top of this letter, my first for years, that part of it which, as the most egoistic, should fitly be mentioned the last: to wit, *I am in the utmost misfortune, and want you to help me!*—A bitter irony will take you; but oh my God!—why do things go with me so that I even am equal to braving that irony?—What should I not, when I have to avow:—with my wife I've been living a whole year without the chance to earn a halfpenny, without the right to call a doit my own? Reflect what lurks in that confession, and you will comprehend what emboldens me to open my first letter to you as I now am doing.—

It is over 4 years since we met,—in the meantime *you* have fallen blind, whilst *I* have to begin my first letter to you thus;—there you have a piece of fate enough for both of us!—

Scarce had we begun to feel that we were living in the heyday of our youth, than we had to learn it could be trampled on; your buoyancy was to be maimed with blindness, mine with constant dearth. When we parted, and I wandered northwards,—do you know the drear presentiment that quivered through me?—It was that two were clasping hands who never should rejoin each other *thus*. My lightsomeness had long been eaten into by the misère which then fastened on my natural sanguine verve. The fight was hard for me, and full of bitter issues; for I was to learn to *renounce*, I was to conquer my whole nature. In none of my endeavours to attain my higher goal as artist have I been successful: I had got the length of having my opera [*Das Liebesverbot*] accepted in Berlin; all it needed was my ability to remain there half a year, to keep in eye and hand the weak and wavering manager on whom I had some personal influence;—but I was poor, and nobody would back me. I abandoned it, as so much since, and went to *Königsberg*, where an appoint-

ment was assured me. There I married, but lack and want pursued me; I could not obtain the promised post, and had to make shift for myself.—

At that time I at last received my first account of you, from someone who had just seen you at Leipzig. From that hour I knew what my presentiment had signified, though I should never have believed it would gain such a cruel fulfilment.—Should we ever meet again, ask my wife what manner of man I became from that hour! The poor thing suffered under it much: all joviality, all freedom, all openness departed from me; I can't describe my situation better, than by telling you that that was the year of my life in which I composed hardly a note, sketched nothing, made no plans. I was most unhappy!—

After that year of suffering, my outward lot at least improved; I obtained a good and honourable appointment as conductor at Riga. There I passed two fairly tranquil years; I might even say I began to recover there, if I hadn't been more and more constrained to see that I am not built for that method of earning my bread. I sought benumbment in a well-nigh passionate activity; but my body was not made for it, and found the northern climate altogether deleterious. I fell into a serious illness, a nervous fever threatened to lay me low for good. Scarcely had I recovered a little, than I was hit by the news that my seeming friend Dorn had most perfidiously tricked me out of my engagement during my illness!—It was terrible; in my perturbation, however, I sought to read the will of God as if this occurrence were a hint to me not to stand still yet, but to strive anew after my higher goal in life. I scraped a couple of hundred roubles together, and told my wife that we must go to Paris. Never prone to soaring hopes, she foresaw what misery we were running into, but consented out of love for me. We embarked on a sailing vessel, and after a fearful voyage of 4 weeks, during which we were brought by tempests to the brink of death three times, we arrived in London; whence we departed, in the first place, for Boulogne-sur-Mer. Our funds had so dwindled already that I held it next-door to impossible to maintain ourselves even a couple of weeks in Paris. Then my singular destiny brings *Meyerbeer* up against me at Boulogne; I make him acquainted with myself and compositions, he becomes my friend and protector. Well, I knew that only under protection such as Meyerbeer's could my Paris schemes get expedited; so I plucked up courage, and resolved to risk it. But oh, what I have encountered in Paris, what a mixture of hopes and reverses! Meyerbeer has stayed indefatigably true to my interests,—but family matters unfortunately compelled him to spend most of the time abroad; and as none save *personal* influence can avail here, this circumstance couldn't fail to exert the most crippling effect on my fortunes.—What has kept me erect, have been constant fresh hopes; apart from which one may easily conceive that my position—with a wife and not a farthing of earnings—must be the most terrible in the world. More than once have I wished for my death; at least I've grown completely callous toward it.—

My thoughts of you, my Theodor, have been one long mute sadness. I never had detailed accounts of you, and that which was told me—was

awful!—Is it true that for a time you did not recognise your friends ? !—Every means of so much as consoling you had been bereft me ; and what could *I* do, poorest *I ?* You were a friend I bemoaned, but who no longer was mine !——Then, only the other day, I received particulars about you through a lady from Leipzig on a visit to Paris. What I heard then, how deeply it harrowed and touched me ; but how it also revived me and filled me with hope ! I learnt that your illness was simply corporeal now, and there were even the best-founded hopes of seeing you restored from that as well. O believe me, this was the only news to pluck me at one grasp from out my plight's abyss ! And in corroboration of it all, they also told me you had actually published a new volume of poems.* So you are poet still ! My poor dear friend,—you now can sing—you've passed the nadir of your sufferings. Let *me* too snatch myself a moment from the slough of my despond, and tell you I am also poet still, or perhaps we both have first become it.—God, for an instant it is just as if we were sitting side by side again before a lovely landscape, and you could see once more !—Hope, hope, my Theodor, we both shall see again !——And look how I have lived *in you*, quite one with *you :*—my just-finished work is named *Rienzi*, the last of the Tribunes ! Who had the first idea of it ?—I even think we've done the work together ; at any rate it is my best.—Let me tell you (—why, I'm beginning to chatter as if nothing whatever had happened !—)—our *Rienzi* has become an opera in 5 acts. I brought it to Paris half-finished ; maybe I had an eye on this place with its ground-plan. But I soon discovered that I might have to wait 2 or 3 years yet, before I could get so big a work produced here, since I must first have earned myself a name with smaller operas ; so, not to let my favourite work turn mouldy, I decided to complete the opera in German and plant it on some German theatre. My choice fell on Dresden, my father-city in a sense, and I've already done all kinds of spade-work to get my opera finally accepted there with Meyerbeer's assistance. Added to which, Dresden is just coming by a fine big theatre quite worthy of it,—Tichatschek and the Devrient are cut out for my parts ; so I will hope to succeed there. I shall send off my full score in a month ; perhaps it may be produced as early as the commencement of next year, when I should run over for it myself. ——Why, that sounds just like old times ; but you'd have heard none of it, if you hadn't published a volume of poems !—

Ah, my Theodor, those are just flashes such as leap out of my night from time to time ; but they don't light up its gloom yet, for, good God !—what hopes of mine have not been dashed before ! I should almost prefer a certain death ; only, one doesn't seem able to die so soon here. Paris is too rich, too rich in prospects and variety, not to be ever affording fresh hopes. Thus at present I stand in fairly promising relations with the *Grand Opera* again, anent a 2 or 3 act opera—*The Flying Dutchman*—my submitted scenario whereof has met with the greatest approval.—What is there not to hope once more ?—

For the nonce, however, I should so have wished to buy my poor

* *Gedichte von Theodor Apel*, Leipzig 1840, F. A. Brockhaus.

wife *medicine!* Will she survive this great trouble, and can I bear hers?—Lord God stand by me, I can aid myself no more!—Everything, everything—the last resources of a hungry man have I drained dry; unhappy me, I had not known mankind, alas, till now! Money—is the curse that stamps out all nobility. How many an obliging friend turns the cold shoulder at that word; connections freeze to stone or ever one pronounces it;—and yet, great Heavens, to what purpose often is all other help, without that most material? Who knows true want, is sure it can be stanched by *that* alone. When you were making me one sacrifice after another, I thought I felt real want already; dullard that I was, to take embarrassments for want, I've learnt to know it now. To have been forced to turn one's wife's last trifling ornament, last necessary implement, to bread; and then to have to leave her ill and suffering unnursed, because the pawning of her wedding-ring did not suffice to purchase bread *and* physic,—what am I to call this, if I spoke of want before?—In a word—forgive me God!—I've cursed all life;—what worse thing can I do? My first message to a scarce-recovered friend is: Send me speedy help; my life's in pledge, redeem it! So—I appeal to you for *three-hundred thaler* [*circa* £45]; and rest assured that, if you send it me, I shall have lived thereon 8 months already, since I have been unable to pay for anything but bread throughout that time. If you, too, turn your back upon me,—I shall know my fate!

See, that is my cry from this wretchedness!—Will it abate? Am I still to see luck?—For all such questions I have nothing save a bitter sigh!—And yet there are hours when, after a glance at the miserableness of so many I have met here, I might be proud of my lot if I hadn't to regard my poor good wife;—she sacrificed her youth to me, and I can do nothing in return but—indite you this letter. I am doing so behind her back; for I know she would dissuade me, since *she* has lost all hope. For all that, I do it; my heart was too full,—I *had* to write and congratulate you on your recovery—after 4 years full of havoc;—and could I write you now without my writing as I have? No—in that case I shouldn't have written to you as friend,—my letter would have become a mere visiting-card. Of those you'll have received enough;—accept instead a portion of your olden self, a rediscovered piece upon the same old theme.

If you would like to restore me a happy day for once, please answer by return; I mean to look forward to that, and hope that we may *meet again!* Ach, Wiedersehen, Wiedersehen! In happiness?—My Theodor, let's hope! Let's hope! In any case we both shall be of infinitely more account then; may we also be it *to each other!*

God's blessing, my Friend!

Thy
RICHARD WAGNER.

Paris, 25 rue du Helder.

39A

Theodor Apel to Heinrich Laube.

(*From the blind man's dictated draft.*)

Sr. Hochwohlgeb. Herrn Dr. Heinrich Laube, hier.

22/X. 40.

GEEHRTESTER HERR DOKTOR,—Enclosed is a letter from our unhappy friend in Paris,* wherein he informs me of the amount of the sum owing. As I know how you are interesting yourself in Wagner's fortunes, I impart this information to you, and only regret my not being able to do more for him now than somewhat to increase my recent contribution, in case there still be time. Would you have the kindness to let me know if I may place this fresh contribution also in your hands, and whether your endeavours for our poor friend in general have proved successful? How gladly would I help him, if I only could act so unimpededly as a few years back!

In accordance with your wish I am sending you across a copy of my poems, and crave your forgiveness if I do not accompany them with suitable words to yourself, as the fate of poor Wagner has moved me too deeply for me to be able to couch in well-considered terms a recommendation of my book, or anything of the kind.

With the greatest esteem,
Yours sincerely
THEODOR APEL.

39B

Heinrich Laube to Theodor Apel.

LEIPZIG, *the 21st 9br.* [*i.e. Nov.*†] 40.

. . . With regard to Wagner, whose letter I herewith return to you, I am more disconsolate than ever; I had your gift first converted into a draft on Paris, but haven't sent it off yet, as I still hoped for its supplementing from elsewhere. In vain. If you could and would augment your gift, I should be very grateful to you, and therefore will delay its despatch until to-morrow.

With best greetings,
Yours sincerely
LAUBE.

* Should this signify a second Paris letter from Richard Wagner, it has not been preserved.

† It is difficult to believe that *this* letter of Laube's is a reply to the one above from Apel, as that would imply too cruel a retardation of the assistance so urgently required in Paris; there must surely have been some further Leipzig correspondence in between, and Apel's "gift" herein referred to must have been a *second* contribution.—Tr.

40

Minna Wagner to the same.

SEHR GEEHRTER HERR APEL,—May you not be surprised at receiving a letter from me, especially a letter of *these* contents. God be my witness that I would rather have drawn near to comfort you in your misfortune, than be obliged to disturb you by such a plea for sympathy. Unfortunately, however, I can't be mistress of my fate, and must now address myself to you to shield me from despair.

Few words will suffice to acquaint you with the occasion of my letter:—this morning Richard had to leave me, to go into a debtor's prison.* I still am so fearfully agitated, that everything is swimming before me; the sole thing to restore me to the power of collecting my thoughts a little coolly is a letter from Herr Laube, which has just arrived and I have opened in Richard's absence. On the one hand it robs me of all hopes of seeing our misfortune removed, but on the other it gives me the courage —my last, I confess—to venture a desperate step.—In that letter Herr Laube writes [that it is impossible for you to spare from your income the amount begged by Richard, but at the same time Herr Laube relates †] that you had expressed yourself with friendship and sympathy; if you knew, dear Herr Apel, how much we are accustomed to the unfriendliness and want of sympathy of those we have been compelled to appeal to for help, you would be able to understand how these tidings have somewhat revived my hope. And what would be left poorest me, if I durst not even found some hope on a declared sympathy? So please seek in *that*, above all things, what gives me the courage to turn to you.—

My poor husband, who, as a foreigner, does not even enjoy the advantages which fall to natives in a similar plight, is in the hands of a resident German, who has behaved to him with such severity that I can count on no redemption there through softening. What I am to do myself, is still a chaos to me for the moment: even if I had the means of departing from Paris, I could never and never leave Richard in this situation; for I know he hasn't come into it through improvidence, but the noblest and most natural ambition of an artist has brought him to a pitch such as anyone else must unfortunately have reached, no doubt, without special assistance. It was only after great opposition, that I consented to his plan of coming to Paris; nevertheless, the more familiar I have become with his purpose, the more I recognise that it will only be for want of sufficient support, if he comes to grief here and

* Though universally accepted as a startling new fact at the time these three Paris letters, our Nos. 39, 40, and 41, were first published—in a German weekly styled *Morgen*, toward the end of 1907, *i.e.* three years before the remainder of our collection appeared—there now is substantial reason to believe that the statement above, with its corollary in the opening paragraph of letter 41, is nothing but a pious fraud of Minna's, of which her husband cannot possibly have had the smallest knowledge. Suffice it here to say that *Mein Leben*, for all its frankness in general, makes no mention whatever of any actual imprisonment for debt.—Tr.

† The clause within square brackets is from the original reproduction of this letter in the German periodical named in the preceding footnote.—Tr.

doesn't reach his goal, which otherwise might well be granted him. He really has already pushed so far, that he soon may claim the fruits of his endeavours; and it is merely the sacrifices it has cost him hitherto, that now stand in his way. He had got work, and was already earning almost as much as I require to keep his little household with economy; but to-day's event sets everything at nought. For example, he had brought things so far, at last, that something of his was to be performed at a grand concert: the overture to his *Rienzi*, which he has just completed, and for which everybody prophesies a great success, was to be performed in a fortnight; but without his personal attendance at the rehearsal, that is impossible. Is not that enough to plunge one in despair?—What can I do? Poor forsaken one, my tears avail nothing; is it really to end with us thus? Could you, who so long kept a warm corner in your heart for my Richard, let him be lost to us because it is a matter of exceptional sacrifice?—Forgive me God—I cannot think that it should end with us thus.—

Please attribute it to my indescribable situation, if at this moment I am passing the bounds of decorum, mayhap, in addressing you such a request as only desperation prompts. To my horror I learnt once before how much Richard was owing you; you then procured him money through your credit;—but what was his position at that time, against our present one? Would not a sacrifice like that be incomparably better applied now, as the certain prospect also exists now of being able to repay a similar debt in the course of a year, or at the outside, of two? Believe me that I do not usually share Richard's exalted hopes; but I know from the mouth of his own acquaintances now, that he has only to take one further step forward, to arrive at his goal.—

My God, what more am I to say? I lack the composure to express myself clearly to you; I will retrieve [another day] whatever I omit here. The only thing I can utter is: Help, help! Bring Richard a great sacrifice, try and make it speedily possible, and God will reward you, if Richard's grateful heart and my prayers should be too slight for that.—I can add nothing more; Heaven grant that my pleading be heard, and our thanks will know no bounds. Cordial wishes for your welfare from

Your

sincere friend

MINNA WAGNER.

Paris the 28. October 40.
25 rue du Helder.

41

The same to the same.

PARIS, *the* 17. *November* 40.

WERTHESTER HERR APEL,—In the first place I feel I have to beg your pardon for the excited tone in which I wrote you last; it is becoming clear to me that my violent agitation could be little suited to augment

your interest in our fate; your silence tells me that I judge aright. But have the kindness to set down that agitation, which has evidently affected you unpleasantly, even if it did not offend you, to the account of my great misery and the stunning blow which struck me on that day.* I have become calmer since then, so much calmer. I have been to see Richard, and handed him your valued letter, which he heartily thanks you for; at the same time I cheered him with trust in you, and inspired him with the hope that, in view of such exceptional circumstances, you would resolve on an exceptional sacrifice. I admit to you that I have waited daily for a fulfilment of my despairing petition. Richard is ill, I would gladly go and tend him; as that would cause impossible expense, however, I must leave him to the care of God in this respect, and try what I can do myself, upon the other hand, to clear the debt that brings us to this pass.

Richard's creditor sent to me yesterday, and had the effrontery to suggest that I should write to Richard's brother-in-law H. Brockhaus and get the debt paid off through him. So he knows of this connection, and it is clear to me now on what he reckoned with his harsh procedure toward my husband. But alike Richard and myself would rather suffer such a plight for years, than break our oath to never be a burden on his relatives again. This incident, however, has moved me to address myself to you once more, at the risk of being repulsed by you as an importunate. As go-between, perhaps I am better fitted than Richard to approach you for a sacrifice, since I speak for another, and less for myself. I can place myself upon a par with you, since I too have brought him sacrifices; I abandoned my tranquil independent lot to chain myself to his, who seems appointed only to attain his goal through the most violent of storms and trials. Hence I am fulfilling a sacred duty now, nay, perhaps making another sacrifice, in writing to you once again.—

In your letter to Richard you reply that it is impossible for you to do more for him than you promptly did. Your having done even that much, is evidence of your noble good-will; that you cannot bring him a greater sacrifice without exceeding the usual limit of your outgoings, I must likewise believe, since you affirm it. But, without wishing to plume myself further thereon, let me inform you what I did, as girl, for a brother who in certain respects, perhaps, stood remoter from me than Richard from yourself. He had to study at Leipzig, but my parents could not support him; I undertook it in times when, with the low state of our management's exchequer, I often lacked 4 groschen to send out for dinner. Then I would pawn my ear-rings and the like, which often were indispensable to me for the theatre, send the money away for my brother to learn a little with, and keep back a mere three pfennige to buy myself a roll, which I devoured on a walk round the town, pretending to my landlady that I had been invited out to dine.—Should the poor and needy alone, then, have the instinct for this kind of sacrifice? Could the well-to-do, to whom it relatively might come so infinitely easier, not find among all his possessions the means of helping in a kindred way?—It

* See my first footnote to letter 40.—Tr.

may be objected, that this was for a brother;—for a brother it wouldn't be too much, if one sacrificed the half of one's property: but should a friend, then, not be worth at least a hundredth part? And Richard was and is your friend, in the word's strict sense; I can testify to that, for I know the impression the first news of your mournful fate produced on him, and have been witness and partaker of the profound emotion with which he has always remembered you during the long years he has been parted from you. Still more—though it does not beseem me to dwell on it,—in Richard there is a fine talent to save that is being brought to the verge of extinction; for he has already got the length of abandoning all courage, without which his higher destiny is lost. Perhaps a heavy responsibility will rest on those who shrug their shoulders now, and turn their backs on him. *I* cannot forsake him; for which reason I also, perhaps, am the only one who feels most vividly how shameful it is to let him go to ruin.—I pray you for my husband, for your friend, will you abandon *our* Richard because it is a matter of letting him have a sum of money *quickly* through your credit? Truly, you will not wish to do that,—for, looked at so barely, it depends on your *will;* and of this last we may be certain,—your valued letter speaks for it, and the noble nature you have always shewn.

I have done *my* share, I can honestly say that for myself; you won't let yours fail, and God will repay you through your rapid recovery, also establish a new bond of friendship between us that shall never be loosed.

With cordial regards I remain

Yours sincerely

MINNA WAGNER.

25 rue du Helder.

P.S.—If you make up your mind, it scarcely needs mentioning that the greatest of haste is a condition of weight; from every point of view I must beg you at least not to pass the matter by *in silence*, for uncertainty is the *most awful* thing of all.

[The above must have been followed in a few days by the remittance spoken of in Laube's letter, No. 39B. Thereafter comes a gap of nearly thirteen years, partly filled, perhaps, by an occasional meeting during Richard Wagner's seven-year residence in Dresden, 1842 to 1849. Finally we have one solitary letter from Switzerland.—Tr.]

42

(*No outward address.*)

DEAR OLD FRIEND,—Don't be cross at my answering you so late; I have had a number of visitors, including Liszt; then I had to come to a Bath in the highlands of Graubünden, where my very ailing health necessitates my taking a cure during which I am not allowed to do anything much, not even to write. Consequently you'll learn but little of me this time. Yet among that little I want to tell you that your letter delighted me greatly, and I thank you heartily for it.

You have awakened many memories; the brightest of which undoubtedly is our Bohemian tour. If I want to recall any time when I really and truly enjoyed myself, that journey alone can recur to me: health, youth, and a flock of wild hopes—with yourself—were then my companions! And that was a thing that would never repeat itself: in tumult of mind and unrest did I live till my 36th year, only to discover at last—all too late for retrieving—that I strictly had not enjoyed my life at all. That discovery made me furious, and I threw the whole fardel of Art-and-Kapellmeister honours on the dust-heap,—as no doubt you have heard!—Thereafter it was a hard job to return to my art; yet I was bound to feel that nothing save Art can serve as surrogate for a lost life. According to which, the truest art is merely elegy, or yearning—the nightingale's song; and my own best art is nothing else than this at its intensest pitch. As for life, why, Irony must eke it out; and with health but half set up, then Humour comes, which I still find easiest in this lovely Switzerland. So I am at it again, bracing myself for a major art-work: I expect to be soon beginning the music for my big festival-play (*Bühnenfestspiel*) "Der Ring des Nibelungen," which will take me some three or four years, since there are as good as 4 whole dramas to it. After that, its performance will occupy me, which I think of some day turning into a special dramatic festival at Zurich. You are hereby invited!—

Certainly I saw your "Nähkätchen"*; I considered its performance [at Zurich?] not so bad. It made a good impression. I was surprised and delighted at your having been able to do a thing of that sort now. The simple subject gains importance through your having felt it. With its execution one can but agree; only I was annoyed in the plot by a lingering respect for social conventions that are revolting not only in their distortion, but even in their humanest physiognomy, and therefore should never be treated by a man of brains, or solely with scorn and contempt. Yet even that impression is effaced by the sense of a certain *naïvetê*, which doesn't allow one's objection to make itself too strongly felt.

Do write something else soon!—

I should have liked to learn a little more about your personal position; are you not married?—Do not mention your malady, it makes me too sad; although it fills me with delight to see you so well equipped with cheerfulness to bear your lot. Dear friend, I often don't quite know what *I* have eyesight for; presumably, however, just to renounce all that pleases it.—

I intend going to Italy very shortly, so far as it is open to me: Nice, Genoa, Corsica. It is a last wish of mine; who knows if its fulfilment can rejoice me long!—

I fancy you'll be hearing my *Lohengrin* also in a little while; I have given the Leipzig theatre permission for it, on the condition that Liszt shall supervise the production in my behalf. That doubtless is the

* "The Little Sempstress" [?], a comedy of Apel's, subsequently printed among his *Dramatische Werke* (2 vols., Leipzig, 1856, etc.).

noblest work I've written yet. Unfortunately, I have been unable to hear its music myself; what Nature imposed upon Beethoven, the Police now impose upon me:—to be deaf. So, poor blind man, console yourself with me!—

Farewell for to-day, dear friend; I mustn't write any longer. But as *you* only need to dictate, I expect a good long letter from you very soon; be sure it will be welcomed by me with heartfelt joy. Greet whoever still may know me; Isidor Linden, too, if you should meet him again!—

Address your letter to Zurich. Adieu! hold dear

Thy

RICHARD WAGNER.

St. Moritz, Ctn. Graubünden,
3. August 1853.

P.S.—My wife entrusted me with kind regards for you before I started for here; please take them.—

If you have anybody who can read *well* to you, please get my sister [Cäcilie] Avenarius to lend you my poem "Der Ring des Nibelungen"!—

[THE END.]

The Handling of Words

T. Hardy

By Vernon Lee

HARDY, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, p. 42 (cheap edition). Five hundred words. Nouns, pronouns, and nominal words, 108; verbs, 62; adjectives and adverbs, 62.

"However, Tess found at last approximate expression for her feelings in the old Benedicite that she had lisped from infancy, and it was enough. Such high contentment with such a slight initial performance as that of her having started towards a means of independent living was a part of the Durbeyfield temperament.

"Tess, it is true, wished to walk uprightly, while her father did nothing of the kind; but she resembled him in being content with immediate and small achievements, and in having no mind for laborious effort towards such petty social advancement as could alone be effected by a family so heavily handicapped as the once powerful d'Urbervilles were now. There was, it should be said, the energy of her mother's unexpended family, as well as the natural energy of Tess's years, rekindled after the experience which had so overwhelmed her for the time.

"Let the truth be told: women do as a rule live through such humiliations, and regain their spirits and again look about them with an interested eye. While there's life there's hope is a conviction not so entirely unknown to the betrayed as some amiable theorists would have us believe.

"Tess Durbeyfield, then, in good heart, and full of zest for life, descended the Egdon Slopes lower and lower towards the dairy of her pilgrimage. The marked difference, in the final particular, between the rival vales now showed itself. The secret of Blackmoor was best discovered from the heights above; to read aright the valley before her it was necessary to descend into its midst. When Tess had accomplished this feat she found herself to be standing on a green-carpeted level, which stretched to the east and west as far as the eye could reach. The river had stolen from the higher tracts and brought in

particles to the vale all this horizontal land; and now, exhausted, aged, and attenuated, lay serpentining along through the midst of its former spoils. Not sure of her direction, Tess stood still upon the hemmed expanse of verdant flatness, like a fly on a billiard-table of indefinite length, and of no more consequence to her surroundings than that fly.

"The sole effect of her presence upon the placid valley so far had been to excite the mind of a solitary heron, which, after descending to the ground not far from her path, stood, with neck erect, looking at her. Suddenly there arose from all parts of the lowlands a prolonged and repeated call. From the furthest east to the furthest west, the cries spread as if by contagion, accompanied in some cases by the barking of a dog. It was not the expression of the valley's consciousness that beautiful Tess had arrived, but the ordinary announcement of milking-time, half-past four o'clock, when the dairymen set about getting in the cows.

"The red and white herd nearest at hand which had been phlegmatically waiting," etc.

This passage forces me to examine into the nature of the words I have not counted in my several analyses. For whereas the other writers analysed give from 132 to 159 nouns, Hardy gives 108; while verbs rise to 62, higher, that is, than Kipling and Hewlett, and adjectives to 62; that is to say, 9 more than Kipling, 8 more than Hewlett, who was highest on my list. First let me see how I account for those additional adjectives.

At first sight, on re-reading the passage from end to end, I am not struck by many adjectives and adverbs to omit. It seems perhaps unnecessary that the river should be at once "exhausted, aged, and attenuated." But on reconsidering the sentence it is difficult to decide which of these adjectives is the superfluous one. *Exhausted* is not implied in *attenuated*, nor is either *exhausted* or *attenuated* implied in *aged*, nor *aged* in the two others. The expression tallies with the thought; and it is the thought itself which is redundant and vague. We are being *told all about* the locality, not what is necessary for the intelligence of the situation.

Thus in these five hundred words we are twice given points of the compass—that is to say, information which has nothing to do with the subject in hand, and which the reader neither needs, nor, as a fact, is able to apply. For points of the compass can add to the meaning of a passage only if: (1) we already possess the geography of the region, and require to feel in which

direction on the map the traveller is going; thus it is of consequence to know that Stevenson drove his donkey, say, south-east or south-west; it is of consequence if I say, "forests lying north of Paris—the seaboard west of Rome," etc. (2) points of the compass can be mentioned usefully if by so doing we imply a peculiarity of light or warmth or the movement of the day. We learn something when we are told that "the sun was now in the west," or that a room "faces north."

But what do we learn when Hardy tells us that a particular valley, whose name is imaginary, *stretched to the east and west as far as the eye could reach*. The only movement in one's mind is a faint question, "Was the valley so very narrow as not to stretch at all north and south; and, if it was so narrow, is the word *stretched* very applicable to its east and west direction? Does a ribbon stretch?

We get a reference to this detail of orientation further on—"from the furthest east to the furthest west the cries spread"—and, as we perceive no reason for this dragging in of points of the compass, we imagine one, and have a slight idea that the sounds rose in the east in some sort of connection with the sun. At least this is my experience; and I feel annoyed at finding that that east and west really implies nothing about the sounds.

This talk of orientation is a mere mark of irrelevant writing, of saying everything there is to be said about the subject, as we have seen about the river. It is a soliloquy of Hardy's about two valleys and their contents, without reference to the story or the reader: "The marked difference, in the final particular, between the rival vales now showed itself"—"The secret of Blackmoor was best discovered from the heights above; to read aright the valley before her it was necessary to descend into its midst."

Now, we can quite imagine a passage in Stevenson comparing two valleys much in this manner; but then the valleys and his journey, the genius of the place, so to speak, would be the chief personages; and the points of comparison would be such as the reader who had never been in that place could visualise in fancy. But here we are not merely listening to Hardy's recollections poured out without reference to us, but we are, while doing so, interrupted in our attempt to follow the adventures and the inner vicissitudes of Tess. All this detail about the geological formation, "the river had stolen from the higher tracts and brought in particles to the vale all this horizontal land," all this orientation and comparison of lie of land, is subject to the sentence: "T. D., then . . . full of zest

for life, descended the Egdon Slopes lower and lower towards the dairy of her pilgrimage." And the sentence of comparison between the two valleys is suddenly succeeded by "When Tess had accomplished this feat she found herself to be standing on a green-carpeted level," etc. After which we again leave Tess in order to remark on the geological history, as noted above.

After disposing of the river in the prehistoric past, we revert to Tess who "was not sure of her direction." And this lack of certainty is in Hardy as well as in his heroine.

This is how he tell us the very simple fact of how Tess stops to look round: "Tess . . . stood still upon the hemmed expanse of verdant flatness, like a fly on a billiard-table of indefinite length." "*Hemmed* expanse," that means that the expanse had limits; it is, however, compared to a billiard-table "of indefinite length." This means that Hardy's attention has slackened and that he is talking a little at random. If he visualised the valley, particularly from above, he would not think of it, which is bounded by something on his own higher level (hemmed, by which he means hemmed in), in connection with a billiard-table, which is bounded by the very slight wall of its cushion. I venture to add that if, at the instant of writing, he were feeling the variety, the freshness of a valley, he would not be comparing it to a piece of cloth, with which it has only two things in common, being flat and being green; the flatness and greenness of a landscape and that of a billiard-table.

This is a case of slackened interest, when the writer casts about for and accepts any illustration, without realising it sufficiently to reject it. This slackening of attention is confirmed by the poor structure of the sentence "a fly on a billiard-table of indefinite length, *and* of no more consequence to her surroundings than that fly." The *and* refers the "of no more consequence" in the first instance to the billiard-table. Moreover, I venture to think that the whole remark was not worth making: why divert our attention from Tess and her big, flat valley, surely easy enough to realise, by a vision of a billiard-table with a fly on it? Can the two images ever grow into one another? Is the first made clearer, richer, by the second? How useless all this business has been is shown by the next sentence. "The sole effect of her presence upon the placid valley so far had been to excite the mind of a solitary heron, which, after descending to the ground not far from her path, stood, with neck erect, looking at her." Leave out all about the billiard-table, and the sentences coalesce perfectly and give us all we care to know. In fact, they give us a good deal more;

not indeed of items, but of words. "The *sole effect* of her *presence*," etc. Here are two nouns, both abstract, and an adjective not of quality, but degree. Then "so far"—with the tense "had been"—giving the notion of far longer time than Tess probably stayed looking about. Moreover, her presence excited not the solitary heron, but the *mind* of the solitary heron. And the heron, we are told, "descended to the ground *not far* (why not *near?*) from her path," etc. How all the action of the heron's downward flight and sudden inquisitive stopping is lost in all these circuitous phrases! We scarcely see the heron at all.

The next sentence startles us after all these meanderings; and as it tells us of something startling it is right it should startle us. But it does so merely by contrast with the vagueness of the preceding sentences; for in itself it is weak and vague. "Suddenly there arose . . . a call" is the only active element in it; "*from all parts* of the lowlands" is again slovenly, for the meaning is simply "from all around," and the reference to *parts*, the reiteration of *lowlands* (as if by this time we hadn't been told often enough that we were in a valley) is mere padding.

The next sentence is largely a repetition of this, with the added, useless orientation "from the furthest east to the furthest west, the cries spread," but Hardy must add "as if by contagion." This adds something, undoubtedly, to the meaning; but the impression of the cries waking each other as they spread could be given without carrying the reader's mind to "contagion." Nor is Hardy satisfied—"accompanied *in some cases* by the barking of a dog." He has given us an orientation, he has explained that the cries arose in echoing succession; why bring in "some cases," why say "accompanied by," when the meaning is merely "and here and there the bark of a dog"?

"It was not the expression of the valley's consciousness that beautiful Tess had arrived"—two abstractions added to a personification—a cumbersome statement attempting to weld together the disjointed items about the valley's origin (old, exhausted stream, etc.), its orientation, flatness, greenness, etc., with Tess's journey; for Hardy is uneasy at having talked thus at random. However, it is not the poetico-mythological greeting thus suggested in philosophical words ("expression of the valley's consciousness"), it is, Hardy hastens to tell us, "but the ordinary announcement of milking-time," and he adds "half-past four o'clock, when the dairymen set about getting in the cows."

This page is so constructed, or rather not constructed, that

if you skip one sentence, you are pretty sure to receive the same information in the next; and if you skip both, you have a chance of hearing all you need later on. This makes it lazy reading; and it is lazy writing.

Lazy reading is not without attractions, for we are often lazy; and I can conceive that some of Hardy's popularity, despite certain great qualities of fantastic imagination, unusualness of feeling, and a certain almost pantheistic or mythological spirit—all of them rather caviare to the general—may be due to this indulgence of the reader's indolence. But it is bought at the price of the reader's indifference.

It may be convenient to read a novel, skipping whole phrases and passages and moving in slow and somnolent fashion; but in our waking moments our energy, seeking for employment, resents these heaps of useless words to be left aside; and it demands of an author to direct it along definite ways, at definite speeds; it wants to be made to move briskly, rhythmically, to march, nay, as Nietzsche puts it, *to dance*.

Now marching and dancing are done in literature, as in all art, by the awakening of the activities of measuring, comparing, and unifying; these analyses have persuaded me that the *active quality* in literature is not due so much to a richness of words—of verbs—expressing action, as to the presence of words, and arrangements of sentences, *forcing the reader to think. To think;* for literature, let us remember, deals entirely with thought and its modes, and constructs its patterns, not of sounds or lines, but of the impressions in our memory. To *think*, but not in the sense of thinking whether a thing is true or false, the contents of a sentence put back, as it were, from the sphere of words into that of real experience; but to *think* in the sense of thinking, of following, realising the relations in which, by the placing of words, this contents is put. The intellectual activity of the reader is called forth in realising the comparative importance of the different items mentioned, their dependence upon one another; it is forced to pass from side to side, seeking equivalents and differences, backwards and forwards, identifying causes and effects, and round, in front, and behind, getting at things at their proper angle of vision: he is made to construct the meaning, as the sentence is constructed, in a more or less elaborate logical architecture, or, if you prefer, counterpoint; and made to do so at a pace, with an accentuation ordered by the writer.

Now this activity of the reader, when it is sufficient for complete response, is stimulated and kept alive by the swiftness

and certainty demanded of it, and by the constant need of perceiving and co-ordinating variety. A page of literature, whatever its subject-matter, gives us the impression of movement in proportion as it makes *us* move : not forwards merely, but in every direction ; and in such manner as to return back on the parts and fold them into unity.

All this is mainly a work of logic. To begin with, there is the general distribution of the subject-matter, the amount of cause and effect, of similarity and dissimilarity, which the reader is made to perceive therein. In this page of *Tess*, such distribution can scarcely be said to exist. The five hundred words chosen begin with psychological remarks on the state of mind of Tess, on the hereditary characteristics of her family, with an excursion on the peculiarities of the feminine mind. All this, loosely but sufficiently put together, should constitute the end of a chapter ; we ought to be allowed more than a mere paragraph before passing from this inner landscape to the outer one ; or else the two ought to be interwoven, as we find it, even trickily, in Zola and other French writers, by attempting to show how the new scenery affected Tess's mood. Hardy has neither broken off and paused, nor worked the two subjects into one another. He has connected them by one little word only, the word *then*. " Tess Durbeyfield, *then*, in good heart, and full of zest for life, descended the Egdon Slopes." This would be sufficient, the *then* standing vaguely for all the foregoing, and loosely connecting the past with the present, if we continued to talk of Tess ; if, for instance, the passage continued, " Crossing the hill, Tess saw the new valley before her and noted its difference from the one she had left behind her." But Tess is simply dropped ; not even set about some action which we could continue to feel all along, and find, at a further stage, when we revert to her. Tess is forgotten ; and, instead, our attention is called, without anything denoting deliberate intention, to those details of lie of the land and geological structure. Hardy would seem to have suddenly remembered Tess and felt that she ought not to have been neglected. But so perfunctory is his co-ordination, so slack his realisation, that he reverts to her with an expression which is utterly unsuitable. Having introduced the two words " before her " quite irrelevantly into the sentence " the secret of Blackmoor was best discovered . . . to read aright the valley *before her* it was necessary to descend into its midst," he finds no more appropriate allusion to Tess's descent than to call it *a feat*, and describe it as " accomplished."

I mention this singular inaptness of expression, because I regard it as a sign of that general slackening of attention, that vagueness which shows itself in the casual distribution of the subject-matter, and, as we shall see, in lack of that logical arrangement, that masterful impelling of the reader's attention, which are co-related results of the same inactivity and confusion of thought.

I will not go over the subsequent passages again ; my reader can verify at a glance this lack of coherence, of sense of direction, particularly if he will bear in mind, for comparison, Stevenson's marvellously constructed account of his descent from one Cevenne valley into another, and of their respective physical and moral characteristics. The two passages—Hardy's and Stevenson's—represent, within the limit of endurable writing, the two extremes of intellectual slackness and intellectual activity. Having pointed out so much, I will proceed to the words and sentences which, in this page of *Tess*, are of the kind which direct the reader's attention.

The intellectual movement I have alluded to is not imparted to sentences (as I am beginning to think) by the preponderance of verbs as such. But it depends considerably upon the complexity of verbal concordance ; upon the arrangement of different tenses with reference to one another, by which the reader, passing from present to future, from more remote to less remote past, from the historic past to subjunctives and gerunds, is forced at once to realise very definitely the exact import of each grammatical form and to connect them swiftly with each other, thus establishing a kind of *intellectual space* in which the logical concatenation is held, and a series of *planes of action*, more central (*i.e.*, present), more back, more forward, and in various positions of mutual dependence, along which his attention shifts the nouns and adjectives obedient to the writer's behest and thus grasps the exact meaning.

Again I would refer to the page of Stevenson's for an example of richness and clearness of verbal concordance, and also to the page of Hewlett.

Let us examine, with this in view, the quoted five hundred words from *Tess*. There is a distinct preponderance of the direct narrative tense. In the first sentence it is complemented with its co-relative and with the auxiliary " Tess *found* in the old Benedicite . . . that she *had* lisped." Here are, so to speak, two *planes* of past. After this come over a hundred words with nothing save the narrative tense : " was—wished—did—resembled—effected—were "—with only two, and only slightly

accentuated correspondence of other tenses (I leave out the present of "it is true," which does not refer to the story), namely, "resembled him in being and having," these infinitives bringing a sense of presentness into that narrative past; and "having no mind for . . . effort towards such . . . *as could* . . . *be effected* by a family so heavily handicapped as . . . *were* now."

This sentence, without much accentuation, is constructed in a clear and logical interchange of reference to present and to future, while remaining in the past. And it is undoubtedly the most braced and active sentence of the quotation.

Let us examine the terms in the succeeding sentence. Here there is variety: "was (narrative past); it should be said (present with future involved); rekindled—had overwhelmed (remote past); *let* the truth be told (imperative); women do . . . live; regain; look about; while there's life there's hope; *is* a conviction; would have us believe." There is even great variety; but not much co-ordination.

The present tense particularly and the imperative "let the truth be told, women do live," etc., come not to form a clear composition and meaning, but as a chatty interruption. So far from feeling that we must attend, we have the sense that the author is pleasantly divagating into generalities, whither we may, but need not, follow him.

After this we have the historic tense again, with its concording tense: "Tess descended"—"the difference now showed itself"—"the secret was best discovered"—"to read . . . it was necessary to descend"—"had accomplished"—"found herself standing"—"stretched"—"could reach." But this concordance, so far from being rigorously logical and impelling our thoughts definitely, leaves the impression of perfunctoriness. For one does not expect to hear these unchangeable topographical peculiarities treated in narrative style; and there seems an aimless importance in "The secret of Blackmoor was best discovered from the heights above; to read aright the valley before her it was necessary to descend into its midst"; that member, "before her," slipped in for conscience' sake (Tess having been left in the lurch), gives a wrong personal meaning to the perfectly general statement about *descending into its midst*, and contrasts with the extreme generality of the previous statements.

As I have remarked, all this dropping and taking up of Tess like a puppet, sometimes plopping her into the landscape and sometimes withdrawing her, entirely confuses the *planes* on

which we think out this information. The remote past "the river had stolen"—coming as it does immediately after "Tess found herself standing"—appears to be concordant with it, and suggests that the river had done that *stealing*, not as Hardy means, in prehistoric ages, but *while Tess was standing there*, or just before. Substitute for the river "man," and we see the whole thing happening alongside, a little behind, so to say, Tess's standing.

From word 350 to 500, approximately, the historic tense continues: "Tess stood"—with very simply concorded, remoter pasts—"*had* been to excite . . . a heron . . . after descending stood . . . there arose . . . the cries spread . . . accompanied . . . It was not"—few verbs, and so connected that scarcely any variety of what I must call "planes in time" are established.

It is, so to speak, all on the flat; and the attention is not called upon to understand when or why.

There is thus very little of the first item determining a sense of activity in literature. There is still less of the other: of the words and arrangements implying logical processes and forcing the reader to measure, compare (therefore to recollect), and see cause and effect. In the very first sentence of all, which we have had occasion to find the best in other ways also, there is a comparative wealth of the words implying different modes of intellectual movement: "However—at last—it is true—*while* her father—it should be said—let the truth be told." These words diminish significantly as we pass to the second half of our quotation, where the slackness of writing becomes conspicuous; a change so great that I venture to think that with the words "Tess Durbeyfield, then," begins another day's work, betraying the listlessness of the resumption of a daily task, that difficulty of warming to the subject which often obliges more careful writers to write afresh the sentences with which they have, so to speak, merely got their pen under weigh.

But to the lack of complexity of tense and logical form (meaning as these do activity of realisation, memory, foresight, comparison, and causality on the reader's part) we must add another element, which will explain the weakness and vagueness of this page—viz., it is the number of unnecessary qualifications.

A word which qualifies will undoubtedly arrest the attention and initiate a movement of intellectual weighing in the reader. But not if he recognise that it is part of a system of mere non-committal, of adding a *rather* or an *at least* when not needed. *Then* it expresses mere hesitation, lack of energy of the writer,

and the reader passes it over as he would any other form of mental stammering.

Now in these five hundred words a large proportion of the statements are thus qualified where no qualifying is needed. We have " at last approximate expression "—" such a *slight initial performance* "—" immediate and small achievements " —" *laborious* effort towards *such* petty social advancement *as could alone* be effected "—" women do *as a rule* "—" not *so* entirely unknown *as* "—" the *marked* difference in the *final* particular "—" exhausted, aged, and attenuated, lay serpentining "—" the *sole* effect."

These often superfluous qualifications account for the preponderance of adjectives and adverbs; and to them is due much of that impression of slovenliness and lack of interest to which I have already so often adverted.

But these faults may also lend themselves to that total impression of lazy, dreamy, sensual life among lush vegetation and puzzled rustics as slow as their kine (when not stirred by sudden gusts or wellings-up of animal love, rage, or devotion), which it has been the work of Hardy's genius to put before us. Trees, grass, and haystacks do not move about; sheep, cows, and bulls do not think; the pale moon nights, the long, sultry noons are made for dreams. And Stevenson, Meredith, or H. James would scarcely be what we want for such subject-matter.

The woolly outlines, even the uncertain drawing, add to the impression of primeval passiveness and blind, unreasoning emotion; the faults of Hardy are probably an expression of his solitary and matchless greatness.

A Fragment of Stained Glass

By D. H. Lawrence

BEAUVALE is, or was, the largest parish in England. It is, however, thinly populated, only just netting the stragglers from shoals of houses in three large mining villages. For the rest, it holds a great tract of woodland, fragment of old Sherwood, a few hills of pasture and arable land, three collieries, and, finally, the ruins of a Cistercian abbey. These ruins lie in a still rich meadow at the foot of the last fall of woodland, through whose oaks shines a blue of hyacinths, like water, in Maytime. Of the abbey, there remains only the east wall of the chancel standing, a wild thick mass of ivy weighting one shoulder, while pigeons perch in the tracery of the lofty window. This is the window in question.

The vicar of Beauvale is a bachelor of forty-two years. Quite early in life some illness caused a slight paralysis of his right side, so that he drags a little, and so that the right corner of his mouth is twisted up into his cheek with a constant grin, unhidden by a heavy moustache. There is something diabolic about this grin on the vicar's countenance: his eyes are so shrewd and sad. It would be hard to disillusion Mr. Colbran. Indeed, now, his soul has caught the grin from his face, so that, when he is not ironical, he is satiric. Yet a man of nobler tolerance and generosity scarcely exists. Let the boors mock him, he merely smiles on the other side, and there is no malice in his eyes, only a quiet expression of "Ah, well!" His people do not like him, yet none could bring forth an accusation against him, save that "You never can tell when he's having you."

I dined the other evening with the vicar in his study. The room scandalises the neighbourhood because of the statuary which adorns it: a Laocoön and other classic copies, with bronze and silver Italian Renaissance works. For the rest, the room is all black and tawny.

Mr. Colbran is an archæologist. He does not take himself seriously, however, in his hobby, so that nobody knows the worth of his opinions on the subject.

"Here you are," he said to me after dinner, "I've found another paragraph for my great work."

"What's that?" I asked.

"Haven't I told you I was compiling a Bible of the English people—the Bible of their hearts—their exclamations in presence of the unknown. I've found a fragment at home, a jump at God from Beauvale."

"Where?" I asked, startled.

The vicar closed his eyes whilst looking at me.

"Only on parchment," he said.

Then, slowly, he reached a yellow book. Scorning any erudite affectation, he read, translating as he went:

"Then, while we chanted, came a crackling at the window at the great east window, where hung our Lord on the Cross. It was the malicious covetous Devil wrathed by us, rended the lovely image of the glass. We saw the iron clutches of the fiend pick the window, and a face flaming red like fire in a basket did glower down on us. Our hearts melted away, our legs broke, we thought to die. The breath of the wretch filled the chapel.

"But our dear Saint, etc., etc., came hastening down heaven to defend us. The fiend began to groan and bray—he was daunted and beat off.

"When the sun uprose, and it was morning, some went out in dread upon the thin snow. There the figure of our Saint was broken and thrown down, whilst in the window was a wicked hole as from the Holy Wounds the Blessed Blood was run out at the touch of the Fiend, and on the snow was the Blood, sparkling like gold. Some gathered it up for the joy of this House. . ."

"Interesting," I said. "Where's it from?"

"Beauvale records—fifteenth century."

"Poor beggars," I said; "they were only very few, the monks. What frightened them, I wonder."

"I wonder," he repeated.

"Somebody climbed up," I supposed, "and attempted to get in."

"What!" he exclaimed, smiling.

"No, of course not. Tell me what you think."

"I gloss my book," he replied.

"Your great work?—Good. Tell me."

He put a shade over the lamp so that the room was almost in darkness.

"Am I more than a voice?" he asked.

"I can see your hand," I replied. He moved entirely from the circle of light. Then his voice began, sing-song, sardonic:

"I was a serf at Rollestoun's, Newthorpe Manor, master of the stables I was. One day a horse bit me as I was grooming him. The brute was an old enemy of mine. I fetched him a blow across the nose. Then, when he got a chance, he lashed out at me and caught me a gash over the mouth. I snatched at a hatchet and cut his head. He yelled, fiend as he was, and strained for me with all his teeth bare. I brought him down.

"For killing him they flogged me. I was sturdy, because we house-serfs got plenty to eat. I was sturdy, but they flogged me till I could scarcely move. The next night I set fire to the stables, and the stables set fire to the house. I watched and saw the red flame rise and look out of the window, I saw the folk running out, each for himself, master no more than one of a frightened party. It was freezing, but the heat made me sweat. I saw them all turn again to watch, all rimmed with red. They cried, all of them when the roof went in, when the sparks splashed up at rebound. They cried then like dogs at the bagpipes howling. Master cursed me, till I laughed as I lay under a bush quite near.

"As the fire went down I got frightened. I ran for the woods, with fire blazing in my eyes and crackling in my ears. For hours I was all fire. Then I went to sleep under the bracken. When I woke it was evening. I had no mantle, was frozen stiff. I was afraid to move, lest all the sore of my back should be broken like thin ice. I lay still until I could bear my hunger no more. I moved then to get used to the pain of movement when I began to hunt for food. There was nothing to be found but hips.

"After wandering about till I was faint I dropped again in the bracken. The boughs above me creaked with frost. I started and looked round. The branches were like hair among the starlight. My heart stood still. Again there was a creak, creak, and suddenly a whoop, that whistled in fading. I fell down in the bracken like dead wood. Yet, by the peculiar whistling sound at the end, I knew it was only the ice bending or tightening in the frost. I was in the woods above the lake, only two miles from the Manor. And yet, when the lake whooped hollowly again, I clutched the frozen soil, every one of my muscles as stiff as the stiff earth. So all the night long I dare not move my face, but pressed it flat down, and taut I lay as if pegged down and braced.

"When morning came still I did not move, I lay still in a

dream. By afternoon my ache was such it enlivened me. I cried, rocking my breath in the ache of moving. Then again I became fierce. I beat my hands on the rough bark to hurt them, so that I should not ache so much. In such a rage I was I swung my limbs to torture till I fell sick with pain. Yet I fought the hurt, fought it and fought by twisting and flinging myself, until it was overcome. Then the evening began to draw on. All day the sun had not loosened the frost. I felt the sky chill again towards afternoon. Then I knew the night was coming, and, remembering the great space I had just come through, horrible so that it seemed to have made me another man, I fled across the wood.

"But in my running I came upon the oak where hanged five bodies. There they must hang, bar-stiff, through the darkness of night after night. It was a terror worse than any. Turning, blundering through the forest, I came out where the trees thinned, where only hawthorns, ragged and shaggy, went down to the lake's edge.

"The sky across was red, the ice on the water glistened as if it were warm. A few wild geese sat out like stones on the sheet of ice. I thought of Martha. She was the daughter of the miller at the upper end of the lake. Her hair was red like a whirl of beech leaves in a wintry wind. When I had gone often to the mill with the horses she had brought me refreshment.

"'I thought,' said I to her, 'twas a squirrel sat on your shoulder. 'Tis your hair fallen loose.'

"'They call me the fox,' she said.

"'Would I were your dog,' said I. She would bring me bacon and good bread, when I called at the mill with the horses. The thought of cakes of bread and of bacon made me reel as if drunk. I had torn at the rabbit holes, I had chewed wood all day. In such a dimness was my head that I felt neither the soreness of my wounds nor the cuts of thorns on my knees, but stumbled towards the mill, almost past fear of man and death, panting with fear of the darkness that crept behind me from trunk to trunk.

"Coming to the gap in the wood, below which lay the livid face of the pond, I heard no sound. Always I knew the place filled with the buzz of water, but now it was silent. In fear of this stillness I ran forward, forgetting myself, forgetting the frost. The wood seemed to pursue me. I fell, just in time, down by a shed wherein were housed the few wintry pigs. The miller came riding in on his horse, and the barking of dogs

was for him. I heard him curse the day, curse his servant, curse me, whom he had been out to hunt, in his rage of wasted effort, curse all. As I lay I heard inside the shed a sucking. Then I knew that the sow was there, and that the most of her sucking pigs would be already killed for to-morrow's Christmas. The miller, from forethought to have young at that time, made profit by his sucking pigs that were sold for the mid-winter feast.

"When a moment all was silent in the dusk, I broke the bar and came into the shed. The sow snarled, but did not come forth to discover me. By and by I crept in towards her warmth. She had but three young left, which now angered her, she being too full of milk. Every now and again she slashed at them and they squealed. Busy as she was with them, I in the darkness advanced towards her. I trembled so that scarce dared I trust myself near her, for long dared not put my naked face towards her. Shuddering so with hunger and weakness and fear, I at last fed of her, guarding my face with my arm. Her own full young tumbled squealing for fear against me, but she, feeling her ease, lay grunting. At last, I, too, lay drunk, swooning.

"I was roused by the shouting of the miller. He, angered by his daughter who wept, abused her, driving her from the house to feed the swine. She came, bowing under a yoke, to the door of the shed. Finding the pin broken she stood afraid, then, as the sow grunted, she came cautiously in. I took her with my arm, my hand over her mouth. As she struggled against my breast my heart began to beat loudly. At last she knew it was I. She held my wrist, looking afraid into my eyes. I clasped her to kiss her. She hung in my arms, turning away her face, so that I kissed her throat. The tears blinded my eyes, I know not why, unless it were the hurt of my mouth, wounded by the horse, was keen in kissing.

"'They will kill you,' she whispered.

"'It is enough, I am willing,' I answered.

"'No,' she said, and she wept softly. She took my head in her arms and kissed me, wetting me with her tears, brushing me with her keen hair, warming me through.

"'I will not go away from here,' I said. 'Bring me a knife, and none shall kill me but myself.'

"'No,' she wept. 'Ah, no!'

"When she went I lay down, pressing my chest where she had rested on the earth, lest missing her were worse emptiness than hunger.

"Later she came again. I saw her bend in the doorway, a horn lanthorn hanging in front. As she peered under the redness of her falling hair, I was afraid of her. But she came with food. We sat together in the dull light. Sometimes still I shivered convulsively.

"'If,' said I, 'I eat all this you have brought me, pains and sleep will give me over.'

"Then she took away the rest of the meat.

"'Why,' said I, 'should I not eat? What else?' She looked at me in tears of fear.

"'What else?' I said, but still she had no answer. I kissed her, and the hurt of my wounded mouth gladdened me.

"'Now there is my blood,' said I, 'on your mouth.' Wiping her smooth hand over her lips she looked thereat, then at me. Her tears fell helplessly.

"'Leave me,' I said, 'before I am discovered.' She rose to leave me.

"'But bring a knife,' I said, 'for I am unarmed.' Then she held the lanthorn near my face, looking as at a picture.

"'You are tall,' she said, 'you are strong, but you look to me like a stirk that is roped for the axe. Your eyes are dark, they shine, but ah, with weariness.'

"'Then I will sleep,' said I, 'but I will not wake too late. Be cheered.'

"'Do not stay here,' she said.

"'What do I find in the wood,' I answered, and it was my heart that spoke, 'save evil things. And shall I run into the morning gibbering and fond, to be no more a man, but a witless creature? Bring me a knife, and in the morning I will go. Alone in the forest will I not go now, through fear of the night.'

"'The searchers will take you,' she said.

"'They will not hurt me,' I answered.

"'Ah, go,' she wept.

"'Not alone—do you come——'

"With that she lifted the lanthorn, lit up her own face and mine. Her blue eyes dried of tears. Then I took her to myself, knowing she was mine.

"'I will come again,' she said.

"She went, and for gladness I folded my arms, lay down and slept.

"When I woke, she was rocking me wildly to rouse me.

"'I dreamed,' said I, 'that a great heap, as if it were a hill, lay on me and above me.'

"She put a cloak over me, gave me a hunting-knife and a wallet of food, and other things I did not note. Then under her own cloak she hid the lanthorn.

"When I came out into the cold someone touched my face and my hair.

"'Ha!' I cried, 'who now——' Then she swiftly clung to me, hushed me.

"'Someone has touched me,' I said aloud, still dazed with sleep.

"'Oh hush!' she wept. 'Tis snowing.' The dogs within the house began to bark. She fled forward, I after her. Coming to the ford of the stream she ran swiftly over, but I broke through the ice. This roused me. Snowflakes, fine and rapid, were biting at my face. In the wood there was no wind nor snow.

"'Listen,' said I to her, 'listen, for I am locked up with sleep.'

"'I hear a roaring overhead,' she answered. 'I hear in the trees like great bats squeaking.'

"'Give me your hand,' said I.

"We heard many noises as we passed. Once as there uprose a whiteness before us, she cried aloud.

"'Nay,' said I, 'do not untie thy hand from mine,' and soon we were crossing fallen snow. But ever and again she started back from fear.

"'When you draw back my arm,' I said, 'you loosen a whip-wound on my shoulder.'

"Thereafter she feared not more, but ran by my side like a fawn beside its mother.

"'We will cross the valley and gain the stream,' I said. 'That will lead us on its ice as on a path deep up into the forest. There we can join the outlaws. The wolves are driven from this part. They have followed the driven deer.'

"We came directly on a large light that shaped itself up among flying grains of snow.

"'Ah!' she cried, 'what is it? 'Tis you are afraid.'

"'Nay, though we wander through doors into faery or heaven's room, I am careless at heart. Though faery glance at us between the snow, or cunning spirits, or though we pass through flying, wondering angels, and find ourselves elsewhere, I care not. It matters not to me what surrounds us. Like a shadow I am to thee, that no wind can blow away, nor spirit steal.'

"Whereupon she clung upon me, kissing me lavishly, and,

were dogs or men or demons come upon us at that moment, she had let us be stricken down, nor heeded not. So we moved forward with bold feet to the shadow that shone in colours upon the passing snow. We found ourselves under a door of light which shed its colours mixed with snow. This Martha had never seen, nor I, this door open for a red and brave issuing like sunrise. We wondered.

"'It is faery,' she said, and after a while, 'Could one catch such—— Ah, no!'

"Through the snow shone bunches of red and blue.

"'Could one wear such like a red flower—only a small, a little, like a rose-berry scarlet in one's breast!—then one were singled out as Our Lady.'

"I flung off my cloak and my burden to climb up the face of the shadow. Standing on rims of stone, then in pockets of snow, I reached upward. My hand was red and blue, but I could not take the stuff. Like colour of a moth's wing it was on my hand, it flew like coloured moths on the increasing snow. I stood higher on the head of a frozen man, reached higher my hand. Then I felt the bright stuff cold. I could not pluck it off. Down below she cried to me to come again to her. I felt a rib that yielded, I struck at it with my knife. There came a gap in the redness. Looking through, I saw below as it were white stunted angels, with sad faces lifted in fear. Two faces they had each, and round rings of hair. I was afraid. I grasped the shining red, I pulled. Then the cold man under me sank, so I fell as if broken on to the snow.

"Soon I was risen again, and we were running downwards towards the stream. We felt ourselves eased when the smooth road of ice was beneath us. For a while it was resting, to travel thus evenly. But the wind blew round us, the snow hung upon us, we leaned us this way and that, towards the storm. I drew her along, for she came as a bird that stems lifting and swaying against the wind. By and by the snow came smaller, there was no wind in the wood. Then I felt nor labour, nor cold. Only I knew the darkness drifted by on either side, that overhead was a lane of paleness where a moon fled before us. Still, I can feel the moon fleeing from me, can feel the trees passing round me in slow dizzy reel, can feel the hurt of my shoulder and my straight arm torn with holding her. I was following the moon and the stream, for I knew where the water peeped from its burrow in the ground there were bowers of the outlaw. But she fell, without sound or sign.

"I gathered her up and climbed the bank. There all

round me hissed the larchwood, dry beneath, and laced with its dry-fretted cords. For a little way I carried her into the trees. Then I laid her down till I cut flat hairy boughs. I put her in my bosom on this dry bed, so we swooned together through the night. I laced her round and covered her with myself, so she lay like a nut within its shell.

"Again, when morning came, it was pain of cold that woke me. I groaned, but my heart was glad as I saw the heap of red hair in my arms. As I looked at her, her eyes opened into mine. She smiled—from out of her smile came fear. As if in a trap she pressed back her head.

"'We have no flint,' said I.

"'Yes—in the wallet, flint and steel and tinder box,' she answered.

"'God yield you blessing,' I said.

"In a place a little open I kindled a fire of larch boughs. She was afraid of me, hovering near, yet never crossing a space.

"'Come,' said I, 'let us eat this food.'

"'Your face,' she said, 'is smeared with blood.'

"I opened out my cloak.

"'My arms,' said I, 'are smeared with blood, my knees, my feet, and my back. But come,' said I, 'you are frosted with cold.'

"I took a handful of snow in my hand, wiping my face with it, which then I dried on my cloak.

"'My face is no longer painted with blood, you are no longer afraid of me. Come here then, sit by me while we eat.'

"But as I cut the cold bread for her, she clasped me suddenly, kissing me. She fell before me, clasped my knees to her breast, weeping. She laid her face down to my feet, so that her hair spread like a fire before me. I wondered at the woman. 'Nay,' I cried. At that she lifted her face to me from below. 'Nay,' I cried, feeling my tears fall. With my head on her breast, my own tears rose from their source, wetting my cheek and her cheek, which was wet with the rain of her eyes whose running mingled with mine.

"Then I remembered and took from my bosom the coloured light of the night before. I saw it was black and rough.

"'Ah,' said I, 'this is magic.'

"'The black stone!' she wondered.

"'It is the red light of the night before,' I said.

"'You have killed it,' she answered.

"'Shall I throw it,' said I, lifting the stone, 'shall I throw it away for fear?'

" ' Ah, it shines ! ' she cried, looking up, ' it shines like the eye of a creature at night, as the eye of a wolf in the doorway.'

" ' Tis magic,' I said, ' let me throw it from us.' But nay, she held my arm.

" ' It is red and shining,' she cried.

" ' It is a blood-stone, it cut my face,' I answered. ' It will hurt us, we shall die in blood.'

" ' But give it to me,' she answered.

" ' It is red with my blood,' I said.

" ' Ah, give it to me,' she called.

" ' It is my blood,' I said.

" ' Give it,' she commanded, low.

" ' It is my life-stone,' I said.

" ' Mine,' she pleaded.

" ' Yours,' I said, and I gave it. She smiled in my face, lifting her arms to me. I sought her out with my mouth, found her mouth, her white throat. Nor she ever shrank, but trembled with happiness.

" What woke us, when the woods were filling again with shadow, when the fire was out, when we opened our eyes and looked up as if drowned, into the light which stood bright and thick on the tree-tops, what woke us was the sound of wolves. . ."

* * * * * * *

" Nay," said the vicar, suddenly rising, " they lived happily ever after."

" Hush," I said.

The Double Game

By Maurice Baring

CHARACTERS:

Bloum, Ivan Borisovitch	*A schoolmaster.*	
Bloum, Elizaveta Ivanovna	*His wife.*	
Rakint, Boris Nikolaevitch	*A man of letters.*	*Boarders at the Bloum's.*
Romodin, Dimitri Vasilevitch . . .	*A student.*	
Bernova, Marie Andreevna.		
Count Peter Zourov	(*Her uncle*).	
Philipov, Alexei Ivanovitch	*A military doctor.*	
Dimitriev, Fedor Petrovitch	*A doctor.*	
Nielsen, Sergei Andrevitch	*An ex-civil engineer in business.*	
Harold Jameson	*A correspondent to a London newspaper.*	
Okounova, Sofie Dimitrevna	*Wife of a civil servant.*	
Markov, Nicolas Semenovitch . . .	*Bloum's nephew: a schoolboy.*	
Ponov, Alexander Alexandrovitch.		
Sasha	*A maid.*	

THE ACTION takes place at Moscow, in the apartment of Ivan Borisovitch Bloum, between 10 *p.m. of Friday night and* 10 *a.m. of Saturday morning, in January,* 1907.

ACT I.

Scene: *Sitting-room and dining-room in the* Bloum's *apartment, which forms a part of the ground floor of a two-storied wooden house in Moscow.*

The room is papered with white, shiny paper, which has become the worse for wear, and looks rather dingy. On the walls are several large photographs of famous men—Beethoven, Herzen, Pushkin, and Tourgeniev. L.C. a door leading into a small sitting-room, which is sometimes used as a bedroom. The door is open, and a card-table in the centre of the room visible.

Parallel with this room, R.C. is occupied by an open conservatory forming an alcove, the same size as the small room L.C., but with no wall between it and the sitting-room. It has double windows all round it, which are frozen. It is lit by a lamp hanging from the ceiling. In the middle of the conservatory a dining-table, laid for supper, with eight or ten chairs round it. A small table stands next to the head of the dining-table L., with a samovar, cups, and a metal slop-basin on it.

L. of the sitting-room double windows sealed with cotton wool. Door R. leading into a small passage, which forms the front hall of the house and opens on to the street. The passage continues into the kitchen, and there are bedrooms R. and L. off it.

In the corner of the stage L., sideways, a large china stove. L. in front of the window a red rep sofa, in front of which stands a large round wooden

table, on which there is a silver-gilt bowl full of visiting-cards and some photograph albums. There are several wooden chairs stuffed with rep round the table. A lamp stands in the centre of the table.

On the stage side of the door R., between the door and the footlights, an open card-table, with four chairs round it; candles and bits of chalk on it. Placed sideways across the stage, between the conservatory and the door L.C., a grand piano, open. The keyboard is towards the stage; between it and the conservatory a small palm-tree in a flower-pot.

It is 9.30 in the evening of a day in January.

Discovered: ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA BLOUM. *Fifty years old, with grey hair, intelligent eyes, a kind expression, and a soft, agreeable voice. She has, nevertheless, many traits of decision. There is an air of bustle and confidence about her. She gives the impression of being practical, sensible, and energetic. At the same time she has a fund of sentimentality. She is dressed in black. She is sitting on the sofa L. Sitting next to her, on her left, is* DIMITRI VASILEVITCH ROMODIN, *a student, aged twenty-four. He has a frank, good-looking face. His hair is fair and long. He wears a student's uniform.*

On the other side of the table, opposite ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA, IVAN BORISOVITCH BLOUM *is doing a Patience with a single piquet pack. He is a large, rather fat man, fifty-six years old, but looks younger. He has grey beard, a meek, good-natured expression. He wears dark, rather shabby clothes.*

At the card-table, playing vindt, are:

R., FEDOR PETROVITCH DIMITRIEV, *a military doctor. He wears a doctor's uniform. Aged forty. He has a moustache and a black beard. He is a large, jovial man, and talks in a loud voice, with a good deal of gesticulation.*

His partner, L., is ALEXEI IVANOVITCH PHILIPOV. *Aged thirty-five. He is dark, thin, pale, tired, and melancholy-looking and silent. He seldom speaks. His hair is cropped short "en brosse." Dressed in a long black frock coat and black tie.*

B.C., SOFIE DIMITREVNA OKOUNOVA. *Forty-seven years old, short, fat, and plain. Her black hair is parted in the middle, and brushed right back on either side. She is dressed in black. She wears a large cameo brooch.*

Her partner, sitting with his back to the stage, is SERGEI ANDREVITCH NIELSEN, *an ex-civil engineer, now in business. Forty-six years old, bald, and rather fat and rather coarse, with pronounced Jewish features, sharp eyes, a fair moustache; intelligent, keen-looking. He wears a pince-nez, and German clothes, dark green cutaway coat, and a large watch-chain.*

The card players have each got a glass of tea near them.

NIELSEN: It's your deal, Sofie Dimitrevna. (*He gets up, takes his glass with him.*) May I have some more tea?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: Yes, of course. Do pour it out. (*He takes his glass, fills it half-full of tea from the teapot, and fills the glass up with water from the samovar.*)

NIELSEN: I see our author has published a new book.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: Who? Rakint?

NIELSEN: Yes. It's called *Giordano Bruno and the Movement of Liberation.* Shall you read it?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: I haven't time to read his books.

SOFIE DIMITREVNA: I can't endure all that decadent stuff.

NIELSEN (*laughing*): You mustn't say that before Marie Andreevna. (*He goes back to his seat and sits down.*)

SOFIE DIMITREVNA: Why, is she taken with him?

NIELSEN: Yes, very much.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: Rakint is really very interesting. He's a clever man. (*To* ROMODIN.) Isn't he, Dimitri Vasilevitch?

ROMODIN (*without showing much interest*): Oh, yes, very.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: You don't think he is.

ROMODIN: Yes, most certainly he is clever. He writes well.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: I don't think you like him.

ROMODIN: I? Why not? What makes you think that? I get on very well with him. Do you dislike him?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: There is nothing to dislike in him. He is always obliging and ready to do anything for me. I think he is interesting and he speaks well. He's a cultivated man, and they say he writes well. I haven't time to read his books myself. I don't suppose I should read them if I had time. They are too high-flown for me.

ROMODIN: Yes, fantastic; but he has talent. It's not I, it's Mr. Jameson who dislikes him.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: Ah, Harold Frantzovitch! He was here this afternoon. He said he would look in this evening.

NIELSEN: Is that the correspondent?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: Yes. He's becoming more and more reactionary.

SOFIE DIMITREVNA: I like his articles. I think they are impartial and fair. I think he speaks the truth.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA (*taking no notice*): It's St. Petersburg that has changed him. He used to be quite Liberal. Now he says just the very same things all the Englishmen say when they come here to learn Russian, not understanding the situation, and judging everything from the English point of view.

SOFIE DIMITREVNA: Of course, he has become more Conservative. He has seen all the dreadful things the revolutionaries have done.

PHILIPOV: Hasn't he seen the dreadful things the Government has done, too?

BLOUM: Well, what I say is, the worse everything goes the better. This is the tenth time I've done this Patience, and it won't come out.

SOFIE DIMITREVNA: Did you read in the newspaper what they did at Odessa the other day? They threw a bomb at some colonel who had never done anything, and four or five people were killed in the crowd. Two of them were women. (*Vehemently.*) Is that fair? Is that right?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: That was all got up by the police. We know them

SOFIE DIMITREVNA: How can you?

DIMITRIEV: It's your deal, Sofie Dimitrevna. Let us leave politics alone.

BLOUM (*throwing down his cards*): It won't come out. Where's Marie Andreevna?

ROMODIN: I don't think she's come in yet. (BLOUM *begins the Patience over again.*)

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA (*sighing*): She never is in. She rushes about from morning till night.

ROMODIN: Just as you do.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: Heaven knows, I have enough to do, with these elections—especially since they shut the club. But what she does all day I can't think.

ROMODIN: She works hard—for her lectures.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: She looks so tired, and I'm sure she does too much, and then——

ROMODIN: What?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: Oh, nothing! (*Pause.*) She has changed during the last two months.

ROMODIN: In what sort of way?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: She goes out more than she used to. She looks ill.

ROMODIN: I think she's delicate.

SOFIE DIMITREVNA: I think it's quite dreadful girls behaving in the way they do now. (*The electric bell rings.*)

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: Perhaps that is Marie Andreevna. I don't believe she's had supper. (*She gets up.*)

(*Enter* HAROLD JAMESON, *L. About thirty. He wears a pince-nez, and is dressed in a grey tweed suit.*)

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: Harold Frantzovitch! Just fancy! I was beginning to think you had forgotten. Come and sit down here.

BLOUM: I'm doing your Patience, and it won't come out.

JAMESON: I'm late. (*He shakes hands with* ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA, *and then goes to the card-table and shakes hands with the four players, and with* ROMODIN.)

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: Do sit down. (ROMODIN *stands up and makes room for him. He sits down.*)

NIELSEN: What's the news, Mr. Jameson?

JAMESON: There is news, and bad news. That's why I am late. I had to send a long wire.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: What?

JAMESON: A man has thrown a bomb at Stiegelbaum. (*The card players lay down their cards, and all of them turn round.* NIELSEN *turns his chair right round.* PHILIPOV *stands up.*)

THE CARD PLAYERS (*in chorus*): Not really!

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA (*in great excitement*): Good heavens! Just fancy! You don't mean to say so! And what happened? Was he killed?

JAMESON: No, he was wounded; his aide-de-camp was killed.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA (*obviously disappointed*): Ah, just fancy! (PHILIPOV *sits down, and the card players turn round again.*)

SOFIE DIMITREVNA: How terrible!

PHILIPOV: It was bound to happen; but it won't make any difference. (*He sighs.*)

NIELSEN: Where did it happen? (*Electric bell rings.*)

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: That's Marie Andreevna. (*Rises.*)

JAMESON: On the way to the station.

NIELSEN: Was he badly wounded?

JAMESON: No; they said only slightly. He will recover.

(*Enter* NICOLAS SEMENOVITCH MARKOV, *R., a schoolboy, seventeen years old, dressed in a schoolboy's grey uniform and a great coat.*)

NICOLAS (*gaily and excitedly*): You've heard the news?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: Yes, we have. Take off your coat, child.

NICOLAS: No, Aunt Elizabeth, I haven't time. I must go home at once. I couldn't help looking in to tell you the news. They very nearly killed him. His carriage was blown up and the aide-de-camp was killed.

DIMITRIEV: That comes of insulting the people of Moscow. (*Electric bell rings.*)

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: Yes; and I must say if he had been killed I can't say I should have been sorry, after the speech he made the other day.

JAMESON: Do you really mean to say, Elizaveta Ivanovna, that because a man makes a tactless speech he deserves to be blown up?

ROMODIN: He has done a great many worse things than make tactless speeches.

(*Enter* BORIS NIKOLAEVITCH RAKINT, *a tall man, about thirty-six, rather worn, good-looking, with intelligent, mobile, penetrating eyes. The upper part of his face is fine, the mouth and chin weak. He is restless and voluble. He gives the impression of nervous strength rather than nervous weakness. He smokes one cigarette after another. He is well dressed; black frock coat, black tie.*)

RAKINT: Good evening, gentlemen. Good evening, Sofie Dimitrevna. I suppose you've all heard the news? Isn't it exciting? (*To* JAMESON.) Mr.——Jameson, I believe. I think we have met before.

JAMESON (*coldly*): Yes, I think we did.

BLOUM: Yes, we've heard the news.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: Harold Frantzovitch has just told us.

BLOUM: And to think they should have missed him by so little!

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: Who did it?

RAKINT (*to* JAMESON): It was a student, wasn't it?

JAMESON: Yes. He was dressed up as a policeman. He threw the bomb just as Stiegelbaum was getting out of his carriage. The carriage was blown to bits. The coachman was killed, and the horses ran away.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: What happened to the student?

RAKINT: He was killed.

BLOUM: Poor fellow!

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: How dreadful! All the youth of the country is being mowed down.

JAMESON (*to* BLOUM): I'm very glad he was killed. You don't approve of this way of doing things?

BLOUM (*laughing*): We all know what your reactionary opinions are. To think that they should have missed him by so little!

NICOLAS: Well, if they don't kill him now they'll kill him later.

BLOUM: What I say is that they had no business ever to appoint a man like that. He was known to be dishonest. He must have stolen thousands and thousands of roubles. Ah, we'll teach them!

DIMITRIEV: A man who treats the people of Moscow as if he were a German drill-sergeant must expect to be killed. We are not used to that bureaucratic tone. They may behave like that in St. Petersburg, but they can't treat us like that here. The people of Moscow have shown that they will not stand it, and I am proud of them.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: He was always like that; he was always unpopular wherever he went. It's a miracle he was not killed before.

JAMESON (*sitting down*): I think you are all cannibals.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: Why?

JAMESON: Well, the way you are all discussing it—just as though somebody had missed a good stroke at lawn tennis.

SOFIE DIMITREVNA: Bravo! You are quite right, quite right!

DIMITRIEV: You English cannot understand us, and you've lived too long in St. Petersburg. There are nothing but Germans and officials there. Here we are warm-hearted; here we know how to live. You English are so cold-blooded that I suppose you like St. Petersburg. We Muscovites are not like that. We are sincere, honest. We do not know what hypocrisy means, and we cannot stand being treated in that fashion. And whenever we are treated like that we shall speak our mind.

JAMESON: I'm glad I wasn't in the square to-day when you happened to be speaking your mind in that way.

DIMITRIEV: You don't understand.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA (*to* JAMESON): I'm ashamed of you. You ought to know better, and you do know better. You know we hate these horrors as much as you do But think of all the victims of the Government in the past. Think of the hundreds of boys and girls who were put in prison or exiled without any trial.

JAMESON: I've no doubt they deserved it.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA (*with an impatient gesture*): You're only talking like that to tease me. I won't argue with you any more.

NICOLAS: I must go home. (*He shakes hands with* ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA.) Good night!

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: Good night, Kolia! (NICOLAS *goes out R.*)

BLOUM: That will teach them not to make tactless speeches any more.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: Yes, and not to speak to the people of Moscow as if he were a drill-sergeant. Supper will soon be ready, gentlemen. I must look after Sasha. (*She goes out R.*)

NIELSEN: These revolutionaries always seem to me to try to kill the wrong people. It is a matter of the utmost indifference whether Stiegelbaum lives or dies. He is merely a lay figure, a man of straw.

BLOUM: All the same, the more of such vermin we get rid of the better. In any case, we've taught the Government a lesson. It's the only way we can teach them.

(*Enter* ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA, *R.*)

RAKINT: Stiegelbaum was harmless enough; but he was a fool. Has Marie Andreevna gone to the theatre?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA (*sitting down*): No; but she's not come in yet. I expect she heard the news somewhere.

RAKINT (*sitting down opposite* DIMITRI, *to* ROMODIN): Well, Dimitri Vasilevitch, what do you think of the news?

ROMODIN (*coldly*): I think a young student has lost his life uselessly, Boris Nikolaevitch. I am against acts of terrorism, and, moreover, I think that the people who inspire the young to commit acts of this kind are cowards. But I think my views are well known to you.

RAKINT (*ironically*): It is refreshing to hear the young talk so sensibly. Of course, we are all opposed to terrorism in the abstract.

ROMODIN: No, not all of us.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: Of course we are, all of us; but that's not the question. The question is: Who is responsible for terrorism? And there's only one answer: The Government. Isn't that true, Boris Nikolaevitch?

RAKINT: Of course. (*Bell rings.*)

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: That must be Marie Andreevna.

JAMESON (*to* ROMODIN): So this student won't be canonised by the university as a saint and a martyr?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: Ah, it is Marie Andreevna!

(*Enter* MARIE ANDREEVNA BERNOVA, *L. A girl twenty-one years old, with fair hair, frank eyes, and a clear complexion. She is pale, and looks tired and worn. There are slight grey marks under her eyes. She is neatly but most inexpensively dressed in black. But when she first comes in at the door she has got on her winter cloak—i.e., a black cloak lined with cheap fur, with a cheap astrakan collar. She has also got on a cap made of the same astrakan. In spite of her almost shabby clothes she has an air of elegance and distinction. Her movements are quick, her demeanour quiet and natural.*)

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: At last! We thought you were lost. (MARIE ANDREEVNA *takes off her cloak and cap and a woollen shawl she wears round her neck and hangs them up in the passage. Then she comes back into the room and sits down L. of* ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA, *where* ROMODIN *brings for her a chair.*)

MARIE ANDREEVNA: I am late.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: You are tired?

MARIE ANDREEVNA: No, not in the least; but I have been busy.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: You've heard the news, of course.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Yes, I heard. I must just go and tidy myself.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: Supper will be ready in a moment. (MARIE ANDREEVNA *goes out R.*)

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA (*to* JAMESON): I forgot, you don't know Marie Andreevna.

JAMESON: No; but surely I have seen her before?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA (*knowingly*): In St. Petersburg, most likely.

JAMESON: I believe it was.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: It's quite likely. She's from St. Petersburg. She belongs to a very aristocratic family. She's the niece, in fact, of a Count Zourov, a member of the Council of Empire. She grew so tired of the futile, frivolous life in St. Petersburg that she ran away and came here. She is going to take a degree in medicine, and they say she's most capable. Just think! Only, of course, she does too much. I'm all for girls working and educating themselves, only they exaggerate things! She overworks herself, and she rushes about from morning till night.

SOFIE DIMITREVNA: It's all wrong. It's the same spirit of rebellion and revolt. We shall all be terribly punished for it some day.

(*Enter* SASHA, *R., bearing a tray, on which are sardines, sprats, and cold meat. She carries this into the conservatory, and then returns.*)

SASHA: Supper is quite ready.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: Ladies and gentlemen, supper is ready; please come. (*The card players get up.*)

NIELSEN: It's a good thing we stopped, or else Sofie Dimitrevna would have won all our money.

BLOUM: Please go on, Sofie Dimitrevna.

DIMITRIEV: Vindt makes one hungry. (*The card players go into the conservatory, followed by* BLOUM.)

(*Enter* MARIE ANDREEVNA, *R.*)

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: Marie Andreevna, let me introduce Mr. Jameson to you. Harold Frantzovitch Jameson—Marie Andreevna. (MARIE ANDREEVNA *bows to* JAMESON.) Now come and have supper.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Thank you, I've had supper.

RAKINT: And so have I.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: Harold Frantzovitch, you will have supper, won't you?

JAMESON: With pleasure.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA (*to* ROMODIN): And you, Dimitri Vasilevitch?

ROMODIN: I'm not hungry, thank you; but I should like a glass of beer. (JAMESON *goes into the conservatory, followed by* ROMODIN *and*

then by ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA. *They sit down at the supper-table.* RAKINT *sits down near the table, L.*)

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Who is that Englishman?

RAKINT: He is a correspondent for one of the big London newspapers. He used to live here last year. He is reactionary; but, on the whole, he does us less harm than the Radical correspondents.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: I think I met him once before in St. Petersburg.

RAKINT: Was it successful?

MARIE ANDREEVNA: This afternoon? (RAKINT *nods.*) Yes; and I have got a thousand things to tell you. I am very happy.

RAKINT (*seeing* ROMODIN *approach from the conservatory*): Not now.

(*Enter* ROMODIN *from the conservatory. He goes up to the piano and takes from off it a box of cigarette cartridges and some tobacco. He puts them on the table C., and sits down at* MARIE ANDREEVNA'S *left, and begins to make cigarettes. He has evidently established himself for good.* RAKINT *gets up. He looks at* MARIE *questioningly; she takes no notice.* ROMODIN *begins placidly rolling cigarettes.* RAKINT *walks out of the room, R.*)

ROMODIN: I am afraid I have interrupted your conversation.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Not at all.

ROMODIN: I am quite certain of it. And, moreover, I am quite certain that Rakint is annoyed, and that he wanted to speak to you. But I want to speak to you, too, and I want to speak to you now.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: What about?

ROMODIN: I am anxious about you.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: How do you mean, anxious?

ROMODIN: I think you are going too far.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: I think we will not discuss that now, Dimitri Vasilevitch, if you don't mind. I don't think we agree, I don't think we ever shall agree, so what is the use of discussing it?

ROMODIN: But you must discuss it. After all, I am responsible to a certain degree.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: For me? No, not in the least. I am responsible to myself, and to no one else.

ROMODIN: It does not prevent the fact that had it not been for me you would never have left your parents and your friends, you would never have left St. Petersburg, the brilliant life you led in society there; you would not have sacrificed everything and followed me here.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: I certainly should have done so. Sooner or later it must have come to that. I have no doubt you did influence me, but surely you know that one cannot influence anyone who is not ready to be influenced. One can never learn something which one does not almost know already. You helped me to carry out a plan, but you didn't create the plan for me. It had been simmering in my mind for years. If I had not come across you I should have found someone else to help me.

ROMODIN: I know all that. At the same time you did come across me. It was I who helped you. I was the instrument, the means of your carrying out your ideas. I am to a certain degree responsible.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Well, what if you are? Why does the responsibility weigh more heavily upon you now than it did at the beginning?

ROMODIN: Because you are changed. During the last two months you have become quite different. At first you were content to work among the people; to make ready the way; to try to teach and educate, for teaching and education are what we need more than all things. The light is what they need—"light, more light." But now I believe you have gone further. At first you used to be against terrorism, and now I am not sure that you are.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: I was always a revolutionary. I never believed that anything could be done except by revolutionary means.

ROMODIN: Oh, I am a revolutionary in that sense. I believe that the revolution is the only way; but I don't believe in these terrorist acts. They retard the cause instead of advancing it.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: In the first place, how do you know that I am in favour of terrorism?

ROMODIN: I know there was a meeting of the Maximalists here this afternoon in this very house, and that you took part in it.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Nonsense; there was no such thing. A few friends came to see me. You have been spying upon me.

ROMODIN: What do you take me for? Sasha told me that. Nikitin was here.

MARIE ANDREEVNA (*calmly*): Well, even if I do agree with them, what then? There is, after all, little difference between your ideas and theirs. It is entirely a question of degree.

ROMODIN: We are against terrorism. Don't you see that it is you I care about? It is against your nature, too; all this is not you, it is the influence of someone else which is making you untrue to your real self and to your real ideals.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: And under whose influence am I now, pray?

ROMODIN: It is Rakint, of course.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Dimitri Vasilevitch, I am fond of you, I respect and admire you, so you will not mind if I say that this is entirely my own affair, and that you must let me manage my own affairs myself.

ROMODIN: I know, I know. Please do not misunderstand me. You know I have never asked anything of you. You know that I never shall ask anything of you. You know that I do not wish to interfere with you in any way. At the same time I can't help wanting to watch you and to protect you as much as I can. I am older than you are, after all. I think I see certain things more clearly, and I am certain of one thing. . . . Oh, please don't misunderstand me now. Please don't say that this is jealousy, or anything foolish like that. But I am convinced of one thing, absolutely convinced: Rakint's influence cannot be good for you.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: You simply happen to dislike him. I have known that all along.

ROMODIN: Dislike him! I hate the sight of him. If I saw him dying in the street I would not lift a finger to save him.

MARIE ANDREEVNA (*laughing*): And yet you say you are not jealous.

ROMODIN (*rising from his chair*): There it is! I knew you would say that. All women are alike, they cannot be fair, they cannot look at things objectively and impersonally. Don't you see that this matter is above and beyond all petty feelings like that? It is not a question of liking or disliking, or jealousy, or *amour propre*. Don't you see that I hate the man because I distrust him, because I think there is something fundamentally wrong and crooked in him, something rotten, something ambiguous, shifty; I don't know what, but I feel it in my blood and in my veins.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: And I, a woman—and women are supposed to have far keener instincts and a far more delicate insight than men—I, a woman, do not feel all this. On the contrary——

ROMODIN: You really like him.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Yes, I really like him.

ROMODIN: Listen to me. I implore you from the bottom of my heart to give this up before it is too late. You are blind, Marie Andreevna. You do not see what you are doing. You do not see men as they are; least of all do you see him as he is.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: I must beg you to be quiet. I will not hear a word against Rakint. What right have you to talk to me like this? What right have you to say such things? What do you know against him?

ROMODIN: It is true I know nothing against him. It is only an instinct, a feeling.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Then you should keep such instincts to yourself. You talk of women being unfair. Really this is more than unfair. Just because you happen to be jealous of a man, to blacken his character when you have no kind of reason for doing so.

ROMODIN (*violently*): You have no right to say I am jealous.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: For heaven's sake don't talk so loud. They can hear us. You have no right to talk to me as you have been talking. I will not listen to another word. Leave me alone.

ROMODIN: Forgive me. And I beg you to listen to me.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Not another word. You have disappointed me and annoyed me. I must beg you never to speak to me like that again, and never to mention Rakint's name to me. (*She gets up and goes out abruptly, R.* ELIZAVETA *enters from the conservatory.* MARIE *walks quickly past her without speaking.* ROMODIN *rises and begins walking up and down the room.*)

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: What have you been saying to Marie Andreevna? She has gone to her room in tears.

ROMODIN: Nothing. We disagreed, that is all.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: Politics again, I suppose. (*Bell rings.*) I

find it impossible to discuss politics with you "Left" people. You simply will not listen to reason.

ROMODIN: I was saying the most reasonable things.

JAMESON (*from the conservatory*): Elizaveta Ivanovna, please come here, you are wanted.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: Immediately. (*She gets up and goes into conservatory.*)

(*Enter* RAKINT, *R.*)

RAKINT: Where is Marie Andreevna?

ROMODIN: She went to her room a few moments ago. (RAKINT *walks towards the door.*) Boris Nikolaevitch!

RAKINT: What?

ROMODIN: One moment. I want to ask you something.

RAKINT: What is it? (*They both sit down at the corner of the table, R.*)

ROMODIN: I will go straight to the point, Boris Nikolaevitch. I want you to save Marie Andreevna.

RAKINT: How do you mean, save her? From what?

ROMODIN: You know perfectly well what I mean. You know that what has happened to-day is a mere blind. You know that there is something far more important on hand, which is to come off shortly. You know she is in it.

RAKINT: Is she?

ROMODIN: Yes, I know she is. And I know you can save her. You are the only person who can save her.

RAKINT: Pardon me, but how do you know anything about this? What part do you play, you who are of us and not of us? Don't you understand that a man must either be of us and with us, heart and soul, or against us? How is it that you know our plans, and yet when it comes to anything difficult you shirk the task and wash your hands? I advise you to be careful, my friend, or else people will begin to think you are a spy, and you know what fate will await you then. Some people are beginning to suspect it already. But so far I have stood up for you and protected you. But if you interfere with me in any way, I shall cease to do so. Do you understand? I tell you clearly that if you interfere one jot in our matters I shall think nothing of crushing you. Do you understand?

ROMODIN: I understand you perfectly.

(*Enter from the conservatory* ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA.)

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: Has Marie Andreevna gone to bed?

ROMODIN: I don't know.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: I wanted to see her. (*Goes to the door, R, and calls*) Sasha!

(*Enter* MARIE ANDREEVNA, *R.*)

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: Ah! here you are; I was just going to send for you. (*Calling*) It's nothing, Sasha.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Do you want to speak to me?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: A moment. Sit down. (ROMODIN *walks into the conservatory.* RAKINT *goes out, R.*)

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: I want to speak to you rather seriously, my dear. I was out all the afternoon taking circulars from place to place for the committee. When I came back Sasha came to me in a state of great excitement and said, "Only think what has been happening! We have had a meeting here." "What meeting?" I asked. "Yes," she said, "a meeting in the room you lend to Marie Andreevna for her piano lessons. There were more than a dozen men came to it, and several women." I went into the room and found the whole place full of smoke, and the floor littered with cigarette-ends. I asked Sasha when they were here, and she said they had been here from half-past three to five. I asked how they had come, and she said they came, all of them, by the back way through the kitchen. And that you were there, too. What does it all mean?

MARIE ANDREEVNA: It is quite true; there was a meeting here. We have our meetings just as you do.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: I think you ought to have told me. Just think what my husband would say if he heard of it!

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Ivan Borisovitch is far more advanced than you are, but I promise you it shall not occur again. I meant to ask you this morning, but then you went out, and after that I had to go out, so I just missed you.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: You see, if the police found out about it my husband might quite well be sent away from the school.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: I know. It was very thoughtless of me; only they treat us so unfairly. You are allowed to have your meetings wherever you like. We are obliged to have them where we can, and constantly to change houses, and even then we are never sure of not being spied upon. After all, why should we not have our meetings just as well as you? We are a political party; in other countries we should be treated just the same as any other political party. I know you don't agree with us, but you must admit that we have the right to meet, to discuss our political programme, and to elect our representatives, just as much as you or anyone else.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: I know, I know. But, after all, you must admit that there is a great difference between us. Your people are revolutionaries. Your people want to take everything by force at once, and we say you can't do it, because we know you can't. All you are doing by your violence is to put everything back. That is what we say, and that is why I am sorry that you should be mixed up with all those people.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: I utterly disagree with you. Great changes have always been brought about by small minorities, and by people who are ready to sacrifice their lives. Think of Christianity, for instance. (*Bell rings.*)

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: The early Christians never resorted to terrorism.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: None of our people resort to terrorism except when it is absolutely necessary.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: But you are in some way responsible for every terrorist act that happens.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Not more responsible than you are.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: Well, I can't discuss that now. But I can't have meetings in my house. Besides, the way you do it is so foolish. It is dreadfully imprudent for everyone to come in by the same door—to come through the kitchen. They must have been seen by everyone.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: No; we know where the spies are. There are none in this district at present. Last month we met at a house in the Sadovnika, but we moved because we were spied upon.

(*Enter* SASHA, *R.*)

SASHA: There is a gentleman wishes to see Boris Nikolaevitch.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: He's in his room. Who is it?

SASHA: The gentleman who often comes.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: Ask him to come in here. (SASHA *goes out, R.*) I suppose it's Ponov. He always comes late. I'll tell Boris Nikolaevitch.

(*Enter* SASHA, *followed by* PONOV, *R.* PONOV *is thirty-nine years old; fair, with a moustache; very smooth-spoken and amiable, with dreamy eyes; a colourless personality. He looks as if he had served for years in a Government office.*)

PONOV: Good evening, Elizaveta Ivanovna. Is Boris Nikolaevitch in?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: Good evening. Yes; he is in. (*To* SASHA.) Tell Boris Nikolaevitch.

PONOV: I will go to his room. (SASHA *goes out R.*)

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: What do you think of the news?

PONOV: I thought it would happen. They say he will be quite well in a day or two. How are you getting on with the elections?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: As well as can be expected. I have been out all day.

PONOV (*smiling*): You are the most energetic woman in Moscow. Au revoir.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: Au revoir, Alexander Alexandrovitch. You know the way?

PONOV: Yes; I know the way. [*Exit R.*

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: Where were we? Oh yes, I know. What I wanted to ask you was this. How did you let the members of your party know that they were to come here?

MARIE ANDREEVNA: I sent them postcards.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: What! By post?

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Yes, why not?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: Why, my dear child, they must have been read in the post. The police know all about it by now.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: I don't think so. Of course, I did not put on the postcards "Come to the meeting," but the people who got them knew what they meant. Nobody could have guessed what they were really about.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: All you revolutionaries are the same. You spoil everything by your thoughtlessness. You won't listen to advice; you will have it your own way, and you ruin the whole cause.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: I think you are unfair. Whenever there is a terrorist attempt, you blame us and say it is terrible, and at the same time you take advantage of it. You are secretly pleased when other people throw bombs. You have all the advantage and none of the responsibility.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: On the contrary, we think that all those terrorist acts simply put the clock back for us.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: If nobody had ever thrown a bomb, where should we be now I would like to know?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: Yes, but *now* it is different.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: I think it's worse than ever. What have you obtained by your peaceful means?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: I know we make mistakes, but that is inevitable. But tell me, you are a revolutionary I know, but you are not in any of those committees?

MARIE ANDREEVNA (*simply*): I am on the side of the revolution. I have no will of my own. My will is that of my party.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: I beg you to be careful. All that is men's work, and not women's.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Then why do you have anything to do with politics?

(*Enter from the conservatory* JAMESON, DIMITRIEV, BLOUM, PHILIPOV, NIELSEN, *and* ROMODIN.)

DIMITRIEV: Will you play another rubber, Sofie Dimitrevna?

SOFIE DIMITREVNA: It's late, isn't it?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: No, it's quite early.

SOFIE DIMITREVNA: Very well, then. (*The card players sit down at the card-table.*)

BLOUM (*to* JAMESON): Let us try the Patience again.

JAMESON: I'll race you. (*They sit down at the round table.* ROMODIN *sits down next to* MARIE ANDREEVNA.)

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: We must have some fresh hot water. (*She goes into the conservatory and rings.* SASHA *enters immediately after and takes away the samovar. As* ELIZAVETA *goes she meets* RAKINT.) Where is Alexander Alexandrovitch?

RAKINT: He's gone. He couldn't stay. I should like some tea—if I may.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: One moment.

RAKINT (*strolling up to the piano*): Dimitri Vasilevitch.

ROMODIN: What?

RAKINT: Do you know this tune? (*He plays a tune with one finger on the piano.*)

ROMODIN (*strolling up to the piano*): It's out of *Carmen*.

RAKINT: I wanted to tell you that I have been thinking over what you were saying just now—about the Woman's Suffrage question—and I think you were quite right.

(*Enter* ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA, *R.*)

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: The samovar will be here in a moment. Just think what has happened!

RAKINT: What? (ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA *sits down on the sofa,* RAKINT *next to her, on her R.*)

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: Sasha's young man is a policeman. When I went into the kitchen just now I found them gossiping. I sent him away, because, although he is quite a decent sort of man, I won't have gossiping going on in my kitchen when she ought to be cooking dinner. Well, just fancy! She told me as soon as he had gone that he had seen a member of the secret police walking out of the house.

ROMODIN: Out of this apartment?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: He didn't know which apartment he came from, but he couldn't have been from this one, could he? For nobody has been here, have they, except Kolia?

RAKINT: No, and Ponov.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: Oh, then it couldn't have been from this apartment. It must have been either opposite or from the next floor. But it gave me rather a turn when Sasha told me this, all the same.

ROMODIN: When was it?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: Oh, just now, about five or ten minutes ago.

(CURTAIN.)

ACT II.

The same room, about two and a half hours later.
Discovered: MARIE ANDREEVNA, *writing at the table.*

(*Enter* ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA *from the conservatory.*)

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: Don't you think you ought to go to bed, Marie Andreevna? It's late.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: I'm not at all tired, and I've got some work I must finish.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: Well, well, I shall leave you. Will you put out the lamp when you go to bed?

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Yes, I will.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: I'm very tired. I was quite glad when they went away. Sofie Dimitrevna never will leave a subject alone when it's over. They got so excited.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: What about?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: Oh, about Stiegelbaum again.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: She doesn't understand that we think assassination just as terrible as she does.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: It's all her husband. He is a reactionary through and through. Well, I must go. Good night, Marie Andreevna. Don't sit up too late. You really need sleep. To-morrow is a holiday, so you needn't get up early.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Good night, Elizaveta Ivanovna.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: Good night; and don't forget the lamp.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: No, I won't forget. (ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA *goes out R.*)

(*A short pause. Enter* RAKINT, *R.*)

RAKINT: Are you there?

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Yes. They've all gone to bed. (RAKINT *sits down.*) I thought they would never go. And I've got so much to say, such news. Elizaveta Ivanovna scolded me about the meeting.

RAKINT: Did she mind?

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Not really. She was inwardly pleased, and rather excited about it. But she said I ought to have told her. She says I must not do it again without telling her.

RAKINT: Wait a moment; I want to unlock the outer door.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Why?

RAKINT: Ponov is coming back. He said he must see me again this evening.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: About Stiegelbaum?

RAKINT: Yes, among other things. I knew nothing about it; did you?

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Nothing. None of us did. How will he get in downstairs?

RAKINT: He's got my key.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: When did he say he would come?

RAKINT: Between one and two. It's past one now. I told him to tap at the door here.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: I'll go away before he comes.

RAKINT: Just as you like—perhaps it would be better; only you will come back afterwards, won't you?

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Yes, of course. (RAKINT *goes out R. He comes back immediately.*)

RAKINT: We shall have to shift our quarters. I think I know of a good house.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Not yet. You haven't heard my news—what we settled to-day.

RAKINT: Before we discuss all that, there is something I must tell you.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: What is it?

RAKINT: Well, it's rather difficult to explain; only I have been thinking over matters.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Well?

RAKINT: Don't you think it might perhaps be better if you were to go away?

MARIE ANDREEVNA: What do you mean?

RAKINT: I mean if you went abroad for a time—to Switzerland, say—away from all this business. I'm thinking of going away. I'm tired of it. It's so discouraging, so hopeless—at present. It will all come to nothing. We are not ready. That is the truth. Everything here is unripe—unripe in its overripeness. We're not ready. Look what happened to-day. They threw a bomb at Stiegelbaum. What was the use? What would have been the use of it, even if they had killed him? As it was, everybody took it as the most natural thing in the world. You heard what they all said. It didn't even move them.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: I don't understand you. What do you mean? Give up the whole cause? No, of course not. And now——

RAKINT: I don't mean that. We should work all the same, of course, only perhaps we should be able to do more abroad than we can do here. They are all so weak here, so childish. Nobody has any strength of mind. They are so hysterical.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: All the more reason for our staying here, especially for you, to encourage them. You are not weak. You can inspire them; and you must. It's your duty. As for my going, that's quite impossible. Don't you know what our meeting was about to-day?

RAKINT: Yes—Vasiliev.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Yes; but now it's all settled.

RAKINT: What I said just now was not true. That is not the reason why I want to go away. The real reason is different.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: What is it?

RAKINT: Well, I think all this business of brotherhood, of brotherly and sisterly love, is rubbish. You must know what I am going to say to you. You have known it, I am sure, for the last month or longer. I can't endure living like this any longer, because I can think only of one thing. I think of it day and night without stopping. You know.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Yes, I know.

RAKINT: You despise me for it?

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Oh, no!

RAKINT: Then listen.

MARIE ANDREEVNA (*softly*): Not yet. Not to-night.

RAKINT: Yes, now and to-night. You must hear it. I don't love you as brother; I love you as a man. Tell me you don't hate me for it. Tell me you don't despise me for this—for giving way to my natural human feelings.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: You needn't have spoken. I knew it already. I am almost sorry you have said it. It was so wonderful as it was. But if you hadn't said it I think that I should.

RAKINT: Then it is true; and you *do* love me.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Yes; I loved you long before I met you here. I saw you once before, but you didn't see me. It was in October, two

years ago, just after the Manifesto. I was here in Moscow staying with my cousins. The day of Bauman's funeral—the doctor, you know. I didn't know it was going to happen. I was in the streets by chance. I saw the crowd, and I waited. Then in the distance I heard the men singing the funeral march, quite softly; I heard the words, "You fell in the battle." And they all marched by, hundreds of them—students, doctors, schoolboys, professors, the whole of the professional class, with their red flags, everything so everyday-looking, and without any pomp or ceremony, except for the flags and the singing. The singing was so sad, and yet there was something obstinate about it. And the man who was being taken to his grave by those thousands of people was quite unknown. Then I suddenly understood. I realised the meaning of the revolution, the reason why so many men and women had sacrificed all they had—friends, love, and life; the reason they had killed, and thrown bombs, and endured everything. I understood that this unknown doctor was a symbol. He was anonymous, and yet he stood for the whole of Russia, the whole of suffering, thinking Russia. I thought no king or hero had ever had such a wonderful funeral procession as this doctor. Those thousands of shabby students and middle-class men in their everyday clothes were more impressive than any amount of regiments and ceremony! And the funeral march! It was scarcely sung—just spoken, almost whispered, quite simply and naturally; and yet, how tremendous! And I understood that although this generation might be crushed, the cause could never die. It would live again. They had opened a window which nothing could shut. While I was thinking of this I saw a man walking in the crowd. He was shabbily dressed; he looked sad and tired. I caught sight of the light in his eyes, and there was something in them like the tune of the funeral march. In that man's eyes I saw the whole revolution. It was you, Boris. From that moment I loved you. Then I met you here a year afterwards, and I understood that what I had guessed was true.

RAKINT (*rising in great agitation*): Oh, stop! Don't! Be quiet! I can't bear it. I can't bear to hear you speak of me like that. You mustn't think of me like that. (*He sits down.*) Listen to me. I am going to tell you something—I am going to tell you something which is very difficult for me to say; but you must try and understand. (*Pause.*) When I was a boy——

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Hush! I heard a knock.

RAKINT (*listening*): Yes, it's Ponov. I will go and open the door.

MARIE ANDREEVNA (*rising*): As soon as he is gone tap at my door gently.

RAKINT: Yes. (*They both go out R. A short pause. Then* PONOV *and* RAKINT *come back and sit down at the table.* RAKINT *looks in at the conservatory and in the sitting-room, L.C.*)

PONOV: Can we talk here, or shall we go into your room?

RAKINT: No, no; here. My room is next door to Romodin's, and the walls are thin. Nobody can overhear us here. Have you found out about the Stiegelbaum affair?

PONOV: Yes. It was not planned by any of the organisations. A stray student must have done it entirely by himself.

RAKINT: He was disguised as a policeman.

PONOV: No, not as a policeman, but as a naval officer. By an extraordinary chance there happened to be a naval officer staying at the Hotel Dresden to-day with an English correspondent.

RAKINT: Jameson?

PONOV: Yes, Jameson. So nobody paid any attention when they saw a naval officer—and the curious thing is that the two men happened to be very much alike—walking up and down in front of Stiegelbaum's house.

RAKINT: Do they know his name?

PONOV: His name was Müller. He had absolutely nothing to do with any of the parties, either with your St. Petersburg branch or with any of the Moscow organisations. We knew nothing of him. The matter was entirely unexpected.

RAKINT: But won't it make a great difference to them?

PONOV: No. That is what I want to speak to you about. The matter is urgent. The plot to kill Vasiliev was arranged to come off on Thursday; but this afternoon there was a meeting here in this house, and we know by the steps which were taken that they have settled to do it to-morrow. The executive committee met in another place about two hours ago. We are certain that they must have confirmed the decision. I suppose they think a blow struck now, immediately, will be unexpected. He is to go to the cathedral to-morrow at eleven for the service. We will manage to let them know that there is to be no alteration in his plans. They will have everything ready.

RAKINT: But who is to do it?

PONOV: That we don't know. We couldn't get anybody into the meetings. The lots were probably drawn by the executive. We only know that all preparations have been made, and that no change has been ordered, because if it had they would have taken steps immediately to let their people know. As to who the person or persons will be, that is exactly what you must find out for us before nine o'clock, if possible. That girl who calls herself Bernova—Zourov's niece—she's in it—that branch. You must find out from her who is to do it, and exactly who the accomplices are to be. This will be easy, since you have already got so much valuable information out of her.

RAKINT (*getting up to conceal his agitation*): Yes, I shall be able to find out from her.

PONOV: And you know, if we take them in time, and she is deeply implicated, we can manage to get her out of the country—to Switzerland. We don't want the scandal of her arrest or imprisonment—Zourov's niece—you understand the fuss it would make.

RAKINT (*turning his back to* PONOV *and lighting a cigarette*): Quite.

PONOV: Only, of course, if we are too late, and she takes part in anything, it would be impossible not to arrest her. You see, the plan is

to capture the whole lot before the affair is to come off. We don't want to risk a bomb being thrown. Where shall we meet for you to let me know ?

RAKINT (*sitting down*) : I will come to your place to-morrow, at half-past nine, if that's not too late.

PONOV : Bernova is sure to tell you, isn't she ?

RAKINT : Oh, yes ; quite sure !

PONOV : What's the matter with you ?

RAKINT : With me ? Nothing. Why ?

PONOV : You're not looking well.

RAKINT : I am tired. (*Nervously.*) And then I think we are all of us dancing round in a vicious circle.

PONOV : What do you mean ?

RAKINT (*nervously*) : What we are doing and what the revolutionaries are doing is so ridiculous. We are all of us playing blindly the same silly game. It is entirely a matter of chance on which side the player is. I believe the thirst for risk and excitement is at the bottom of it all—in fact, hysteria. Life is so monotonous that we have to enliven it with dynamite.

PONOV (*laughing*) : You are talking like a professor—no, like a student. I should keep that kind of sentiment for your " works."

RAKINT : You may laugh if you like, but I confess I am sick of the whole business. It's so futile.

PONOV : I believe you've been converted.

RAKINT (*laughing—speaking excitedly and nervously*) : Oh, no ! Not yet ! I remember years ago when I was young ; it was different then. After the Lebedev business. In those days we did believe that there was a difference between one side and the other ! Before the Lebedev affair we were all ardent revolutionaries. We believed in regeneration by anarchy, and all the rest of it. Then came the crash. We discovered the whole business was being run by an intriguer for his own personal advantage. He terrorised one of our comrades into suicide and made off with the funds ! The scales fell from our eyes, and a whole network of lies, exploitation, and crime was revealed to us. Then I went over into the other camp, and I believed in that. I felt I could do anything. I was ready to devote my life to the other cause—to fight the revolutionaries, to unmask them, to revenge their victims—(*laughing*) —to save the country !

PONOV : Well, and now ?

RAKINT : You don't suppose I have got any illusions left as to the nature of our business ?

PONOV : No, I don't. But I should have thought that you derived a certain satisfaction from success. There is only one thing that matters in life. The whole world is divided into two parts—the slave-drivers and the slaves ; or, if you like to call them by another name, capital and labour. The thing is to be in the first class, and not in the second. That is the only thing in the world that matters—to be the person who is on the top, and not the person who is down below. You are

not among the slaves. (*Smiling ironically.*) You are at the top of your profession.

RAKINT: Have you ever read Dante?

PONOV: Yes—that's to say, no—bits of it—like everybody.

RAKINT: You remember who had the place of honour in the lowest circle of the Inferno, in the jaws of Lucifer? Brutus and Judas. They are the men who are at the top of our profession; but we—what is our place?

PONOV: That's literature—nonsense. That is to say . . . And even then Dante is biased. I should like to have Judas's version of the case. There may be something to be said from his point of view; and the other disciples behaved even worse than he did. Both sides are always right—and wrong. If we were on the other side we should be with the assassins, that's all. We're no worse than they are.

RAKINT: I know all that. But it's all very well to say that, if you look at things from the proper height and distance, there's no difference between black and white. But I can't. In spite of myself, black still seems to me black; and white, white!

PONOV: If it is, what do I care? Not a straw. You said yourself the scales fell from your eyes about the revolutionaries, years ago, when you were young.

RAKINT: Yes, then; but now they're different.

PONOV: Ten times stupider, that's all.

RAKINT (*savagely*): What do I care about the revolution or Government? I tell you I'm sick of the whole thing. I've had enough of it.

PONOV: What is the matter with you?

RAKINT: I'm tired. I'm ill. I'm tired of Moscow, tired of Russia, tired of life——

PONOV: I believe you must be in love.

RAKINT (*vehemently*): Nonsense! (*Abruptly changing his tone—smiling.*) I'm middle-aged, that's all, and I haven't slept lately.

PONOV: By the way, apropos of Bernova——

RAKINT: What?

PONOV: I forgot to tell you.

RAKINT: Well, what?

PONOV: I heard rather a curious thing about her.

RAKINT: What?

PONOV: That she has become one of us. They think she has sent us some information about the revolutionaries anonymously.

RAKINT: That's a lie!

PONOV: Ah! (*Pause.*) Well—(*getting up*)—I must go. To-morrow at nine-thirty. And you will have that list of names?

RAKINT: Yes, of course.

PONOV: But in your present state of nerves you might be liable to make a mistake. So I think I shall organise a little search party to-night—we may get some information.

RAKINT: I don't know what you mean. Do what you like. I shall have the names for you to-morrow in any case.

PONOV: Very well, nine-thirty to-morrow. Good night!

RAKINT: Yes, at nine-thirty. This way. (*He leads* PONOV *out R. He returns again presently with* MARIE ANDREEVNA. *They sit down at the table.*)

RAKINT: I am sorry to have kept you waiting so long.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: I had plenty of things to do. Did he tell you anything interesting?

RAKINT: Nothing that we didn't know already.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Now I have something to tell you.

RAKINT: Yes?

MARIE ANDREEVNA: You know what was settled at the meeting?

RAKINT: The Vasiliev affair?

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Yes. Instead of coming off on Thursday, it's to happen to-morrow morning. To-morrow morning at eleven.

RAKINT: And who is to do it?

MARIE ANDREEVNA: There are to be two of us. The lots are to be drawn by the executive committee to-night. I shall not hear the result till to-morrow. Michael will come here and tell me before breakfast. And then one of the chosen persons will meet a cab opposite the Art Theatre, driven by Vasov disguised as an *ivoshchik*, and he or she will drive to the Polish church. Opposite the railings there, Nikitin, who has made the bombs, will be waiting, disguised as a porter, and hand a bomb in a parcel to whoever is in the carriage. Then they will drive about till the time comes when they will intercept Vasiliev's carriage on the Tverskaia, opposite the Gramophone Co. The same business will be done by a second person, who will also be supplied with a bomb, and wait for Vasiliev at the bottom of the street, in case the first bomb should be a failure.

RAKINT: Might you be chosen?

MARIE ANDREEVNA: My name will be amongst the others.

RAKINT: Who are the others?

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Besides Vasov and Astrov, who are to be disguised as porters, and Nikitin, there are nine of us—Treich, Schmidt, Abramov, Korisnietski, Egorov, Marousia, Xenia, Zhitov, and myself.

RAKINT: Is it true that you love me?

MARIE ANDREEVNA: You know it is true.

RAKINT: Yes. But perhaps it is only the cause that you love?

MARIE ANDREEVNA: That was what made me love you. But now I know that there is something more than that. I love you because you are the cause; but I love you still more because you are you.

RAKINT: And if I gave it up?

MARIE ANDREEVNA: It would make no difference to me now. I love you for what you are. I love you because you are you. Nothing that you did could make any difference to me now.

RAKINT: Supposing I betrayed the cause?

MARIE ANDREEVNA: You couldn't do that. That wouldn't be you.

RAKINT: But supposing I did.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: You might just as well say, suppose that you

were someone else. You are not. You wouldn't be you if you betrayed the cause. You couldn't betray the cause, because if you could I never should have loved you.

RAKINT: Do you love me enough to make a great sacrifice for me?

MARIE ANDREEVNA: There is no sacrifice in the world I would not make for you.

RAKINT: Would you give up all this business and go away to Switzerland with me—at once—to-morrow?

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Not to-morrow. I must wait till this business is over. It would be impossible to go away before, wouldn't it? You wouldn't want me to. You couldn't. You would hate me for doing it, and I should hate you as soon as it was done.

RAKINT: But after to-morrow?

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Until to-morrow is over my life does not belong to me. But after to-morrow——

RAKINT: You would give up the whole thing?

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Yes; I think I might if you wanted it very much.

RAKINT: Yes, I do want it very much, but I want more—a still greater sacrifice. I want you to give it up now at once and for ever, not to take part in to-morrow's business.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: You want me to run away from the danger.

RAKINT: Yes, that is what I want. Because now it's all different.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Supposing your branch had determined on an attempt, just like ours has, and I asked you to give up the whole business the day before the critical act, would you? I know you wouldn't. You believe in the cause, don't you?

RAKINT: No. I no longer believe in it. I believe in you. That is all I believe in. I love you, and you love me. What does anything else in the world matter? This is real, and it is so great that everything else beside it is nothing. The cause is nothing to me. It all seems to me unreal and dead. I've done with it. It was a dream. Now I am awake. Don't speak to me of cowardice, of abandoning one's post, and the rest of it. You know that that is all prejudice and convention. You know perfectly well that it needs far more courage to give up than to go on; we should have the whole world against us; we should be branded as renegades and cowards; we should be hunted, and probably killed; we should lose everything; but think of what we would gain! We should be together and invincible.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: This is sheer delirium. You don't mean what you are saying. It's not true. You are giving way to your nerves.

RAKINT: It is true. I want there to be absolute truth between us, not the shadow of anything false.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: The moment that you were in your right mind you would see that it's impossible.

RAKINT: That is not you speaking. It is not the you that was speaking just now. It is the voice of prejudice. I don't believe it. You are not like that. Of course, it would be a sacrifice. It is the greatest sacrifice you could make. That is why I ask it of you. If

you consent to make this sacrifice for me, I will make a still greater sacrifice for you.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: What? I don't understand.

RAKINT: If you give up this business it will be the greatest proof of love a woman has ever given a man; and I, in my turn, will make you the greatest sacrifice a man has ever made a woman.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: You mean it would be greater sacrifice for you to give up the cause than for me?

RAKINT: Oh no! I was not thinking of that. It would be no sacrifice at all for me to give up the cause. I have given it up already. I hate it. I disbelieve in it, and I laugh at it. It is a far greater sacrifice than that.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: What is it?

RAKINT (*speaking with hesitation and difficulty*): It's difficult to explain. You see, I understood from what you said just now that I—that you have got wrong ideas about me. That is to say you think I am—(*he pauses*)—well, you credit me with all sorts of ideals—with your ideals. You judge me—how shall I say—by too high a standard—not, of course, my love for you—I don't mean that. But you seem to think I have your strength, your faith, your virtues, all sorts of things which you have got—and I haven't. There is something else. (*He pauses.*) There are things, many things, all kinds of things, in my life you don't know; if you knew them you would hate them—abominate them. I mean things which you wouldn't, you couldn't, forgive. (*Talking faster and more fluently.*) Now if you will make this sacrifice for me I shall know that your love is great enough for me to make my sacrifice. Do you see? And my sacrifice is—well, I will strip my soul to you bare and naked—as it will be at the Day of Judgment. You shall see me as I really am. I swear that a greater sacrifice will never have been made.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: That is madness. What do I care what you have done? You don't understand. Once and for all, I love you because you are you. There is nothing you can have done—there can be nothing in your soul—which I couldn't forgive. Forgive is the wrong word—there would be no question of forgiveness. The worse it was, the deeper my understanding and sympathy would be. It would simply increase my love for you. But nothing you can say or do can alter what has got to be. I didn't tell you all just now. To-morrow's business is quite settled. I meant to tell you at once, but then it all came differently.

RAKINT: What do you mean?

MARIE ANDREEVNA: The lots were drawn this afternoon. That is what I was longing to tell you when I came in this evening. But then all this happened.

RAKINT (*looking at her and understanding*): It's not you?

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Yes. My name came first. I am to throw the first bomb. Now you see why it is impossible.

RAKINT: No, a thousand times no. I ask you more than ever to make this sacrifice now.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Oh! what is the use of this discussion? You know it's impossible.

RAKINT: Then I will ask you something else, which you cannot refuse—let me take your place. I know your people. I know the man who is to drive you disguised. I know Nikitin who has made the bomb. We have been in an affair together before. We can say you are ill. Let me do this instead of you. You can't refuse me that.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Would you do the same for me if you were in my position?

RAKINT: No. But that's quite different.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: I can't.

RAKINT: I implore you if you love me to do this. It will make absolutely no difference to the cause; but what a difference to me.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: What is the difference? It means the end of our life in any case.

RAKINT: Your life is precious, but mine is useless. I'm finished. Let me take your place. You cannot think what a useful deed you will be doing. At last I shall be happy. You can't refuse.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: I couldn't do it.

RAKINT: Then you don't love me. That is to say, you put what you call your duty, or your honour, or whatever you like to call it, first. You can't sacrifice your pride.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Not my pride, but my soul.

RAKINT: It's not your soul you are saving by doing this, but mine that you are damning.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: I cannot see why.

RAKINT: Because I tell you that it is so. If you refuse me this thing I am lost.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: I am trying, but I can't understand.

RAKINT: And I can't explain. I ask you to do this for me.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: I must do my work, and you must go on with yours—that is to say, with our work.

RAKINT: Our work! Don't you understand I disbelieve in the whole thing?

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Your faith will come back.

RAKINT: Never.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: I can't. Don't ask, because I can't. I couldn't let you do it and then go on living.

RAKINT: It's not as if I were asking you to give up the cause. It can only help the cause. You can have no possible reason for refusing.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Oh! what is the use? You know that is sophistry. It's impossible.

RAKINT: Very well. Not another word. I won't ask you any more. There is nothing more to be said. There is nothing more for us to do except to say good-bye. Marie—— (*He takes hold of both her hands. Dropping her hands.*) I hear somebody coming. (MARIE *gets up.*)

(*Enter* ROMODIN *carrying a candle.*)

ROMODIN: I beg your pardon for interrupting you, but I've got something to say to Boris Nikolaevitch.

MARIE ANDREEVNA (*rising*): I will leave you.

ROMODIN: I think you had better hear it, too, Marie Andreevna.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Very well.

RAKINT: What is it?

ROMODIN (*sitting down*): You remember what Elizaveta Ivanovna told us this evening about the policeman in the kitchen having seen a member of the secret police go downstairs?

RAKINT (*with forced naturalness*): Yes. From one of the other apartments.

ROMODIN: Well, I have been talking to Jensen, who lives on our floor. He says he was in all the evening, and that nobody even rang his bell. He says the Biraevs, who live on the second floor, went to St. Petersburg yesterday.

RAKINT: Well?

ROMODIN: Well, the only man the policeman could have seen was Ponov.

RAKINT (*with a forced laugh*): Ponov—how absurd! Is that all? You don't mean to say you think Ponov has got anything to do with the secret police.

ROMODIN: I don't think anything. But what other explanation is there?

RAKINT: The policeman is probably a fool—he made a mistake. Perhaps he took one of us for someone else.

MARIA ANDREEVNA: Yes, that's it, of course. The policeman made a mistake.

ROMODIN: But if it's true, it's serious.

RAKINT: You can set your mind at rest about it, I assure you. Don't give the matter a moment's thought, Maria Andreevna. I assure you that it was a mistake.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: I am convinced of it.

ROMODIN: Possibly, but——

RAKINT: But what?

ROMODIN: It's strange. That's all.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: I don't think it's strange.

RAKINT: We know it wasn't Ponov or any of us. Either the policeman mistook one of us, or possibly Ponov, for someone else, or someone else called at one of the other apartments and went away again. That's all.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Yes. And now I will go to bed. It's very late. Good night.

ROMODIN: One moment; that's not all. As I was going up to Jensen's apartment I just caught sight of a man going down the stairs who seemed to me very like Ponov.

RAKINT: It was Ponov. He came to see me again later, about some business which concerns Marie Andreevna and myself.

ROMODIN: Oh!

MARIE ANDREEVNA: You see, Dimitri Vasilevitch, it's nothing. Good night. Good night, Boris Nikolaevitch. Please put out the lamp.

RAKINT: Good night, Marie Andreevna. I am going to bed also. Good night, Dimitri Vasilevitch. If you go on first I will put out the lamp.

(ROMODIN *and* MARIE ANDREEVNA *go out R.* RAKINT *puts out the light and follows them. The stage is dark for a moment. Then* RAKINT *comes back holding a candle. He sits down and is shortly followed by* ROMODIN.)

ROMODIN (*sitting down*): I thought you would come back.

RAKINT: I wanted to tell you that I think it most thoughtless of you to frighten Marie Andreevna like that.

ROMODIN: I wished her to know what I knew. She can form her own conclusions.

RAKINT: Marie Andreevna is far too sensible to believe in a mare's nest.

ROMODIN: But you blame me for frightening her. I strongly suspect that her party has got something dangerous on hand; one would have thought that you couldn't take too many precautions. I dare say the policeman did make a mistake; but surely it is as well she should know.

RAKINT: But, good gracious, you talk as if you admitted the possibility of Ponov being a spy.

ROMODIN: That would indeed be surprising, wouldn't it? He is such a great friend of yours.

RAKINT: Have you anything else to say to me?

ROMODIN: Yes, I want to know whether the revolutionary branch to which Marie Andreevna belongs have settled on definite action, and whether she is to take part in it.

RAKINT: I am not at liberty to tell you.

ROMODIN: I insist on knowing.

RAKINT: I refuse to tell you.

ROMODIN: Then it will be my duty to warn Marie Andreevna that she is in danger of——

RAKINT: Of what?

ROMODIN: Of spies.

RAKINT: You think Ponov is a spy

ROMODIN: I know. I know more than that. If you want to know who has told me it, I will tell you. It is you; your face, your voice, and the lying soul that speaks in your eyes.

RAKINT: You know nothing.

ROMODIN: I don't believe a word you say.

RAKINT: Listen to me a moment. There is only one thing that matters and that is Marie Andreevna. I don't suppose you wish her any harm.

ROMODIN: Well?

RAKINT: She's in danger.

ROMODIN: Ponov has denounced her?

RAKINT: No.

ROMODIN: I don't believe you.

RAKINT: I repeat to you that Marie Andreevna is in danger.

ROMODIN: I don't believe you.

RAKINT: Then what is the use of our talking?

ROMODIN: You are right. There is no use in our talking. (*He draws a revolver*). I think we understand each other, Boris Nikolaevitch.

RAKINT (*knowing that this is not an idle threat*): You can fire off that pistol if you like; but remember, if you do, Marie Andreevna is done for.

ROMODIN: I don't believe you.

RAKINT: The plot to kill Vasiliev is to come off to-morrow. Marie Andreevna has been chosen to throw the bomb. I can prevent this happening. Nobody else can. If you do nothing and say nothing I can save her. But if you say a word, or interfere in any kind of way, I can't.

ROMODIN: I don't believe you.

RAKINT: Don't you understand, you obstinate boy, that I love her?

ROMODIN (*putting the revolver on the table*): How am I to know that you are speaking the truth?

RAKINT: Then shoot and have done with it.

ROMODIN: You are right. I will trust you till to-morrow. It will not be too late for us to settle things then. And you swear to save her?

RAKINT: Yes, I swear. But you must not open your lips on the subject.

ROMODIN: I won't. Then au revoir till to-morrow. (*He goes out.*)

RAKINT: To-morrow!

(CURTAIN.)

ACT III.

The sitting-room as in Act II.

Discovered: MARIE ANDREEVNA *writing a letter at the table, L.*

(*Enter* SASHA, *bringing a samovar. She puts it down on the table in the conservatory.*)

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Is Elizaveta Ivanovna up yet?

SASHA: Not yet, Marie Andreevna; but she told me to bring the samovar and to ask you to help yourself to tea at once.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Is Boris Nikolaevitch up?

SASHA: He got up very early. He's gone out.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Has he been gone long?

SASHA: No; only about five minutes. [*Exit* SASHA, *R.*

(MARIE ANDREEVNA *goes into the conservatory and pours herself out a glass of tea. She comes back and sits down at the table.*)

(*Enter* ROMODIN, *R.*)

ROMODIN: Good morning, Marie Andreevna.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Good morning.

ROMODIN: Has Rakint had tea yet?

MARIE ANDREEVNA: No; he's gone out.

ROMODIN: Ah!

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Shall I pour you out some tea?

ROMODIN: Please. You look tired, Marie Andreevna.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: I don't feel tired. (*She gets him a glass of tea. They sit down.*)

ROMODIN: I don't want to intrude in your private affairs, but——

MARIE ANDREEVNA: What?

ROMODIN: I beg and implore you to be careful.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: I don't understand you.

ROMODIN: I mean in view of what I told you last night.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Do you mean that absurd story about Ponov?

ROMODIN: You think it is absurd?

MARIE ANDREEVNA: If there were any truth in it Boris Nikolaevitch would know. He thought it was quite absurd.

ROMODIN: Are you sure?

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Quite sure.

ROMODIN: Of course, I don't know anything, but I can't help feeling anxious.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: But I know that there is nothing in it.

ROMODIN: But supposing there were—supposing Ponov was a spy. Wouldn't that be a serious thing for you?

MARIE ANDREEVNA: He couldn't be a spy without Boris Nikolaevitch knowing it.

ROMODIN: Why not? There have often been cases of men being spies who were never suspected, not even by their best friends. And, then, supposing Boris Nikolaevitch does know it.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: He would have told me, of course.

ROMODIN: Are you sure?

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Of course I am. Do you think he would be afraid of frightening me?

ROMODIN: I didn't mean that.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: What did you mean?

ROMODIN: Oh, nothing! I meant, do you think you are right in believing so absolutely in his judgment?

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Of course I am right. I trust his judgment more than anyone's.

ROMODIN: You mean that you love him?

MARIE ANDREEVNA (*vehemently and angrily*): Yes, I do love him. And you know it, and you are jealous. And I can't tell you how greatly I despise you for your meanness.

ROMODIN: Please don't say that, Marie Andreevna. I want you to understand. It is true that I envy him. How could I help it? It is not out of meanness, I assure you.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: But you are always saying and hinting things against him.

ROMODIN: I am sorry. Please don't think that I am mean. (*He pauses.*) I am very likely going away to-day for some time. Before I go I want to tell you something. I want you to know that from the very first moment I saw you I loved you. I always knew it was hopeless. I had always meant never to speak of it—never to tell you. But now I can't help it. There is nothing in the world I wouldn't do for you. You have been my religion, my god, everything. You have changed the world for me. And, you see, you are so far above everyone else that it is difficult for me to think anyone worthy of you. I feel that anyone who dares to love you must be unworthy of you. That's all. We won't speak of it again. Only please tell me that you don't think I am mean, that you forgive me for anything I may have said or done.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: There is nothing to forgive. You have been a good friend to me.

(*Enter* ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA, *R.*)

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: Good morning. Ah, you've got tea, Marie Andreevna. Have you had yours, Dimitri Vasilevitch?

ROMODIN: Yes, thank you. (ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA *goes into the conservatory and pours out a glass of tea. She comes back and sits down at sofa.*)

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: I am surprised at your getting up so early. To-day's a holiday, and I thought you would take the opportunity of having a real good rest and sleeping till dinner. I am sure you need it.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: I'm far too busy.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: You can't surely be busy to-day.

(*Enter* BLOUM, *R., reading the newspaper.*)

BLOUM: Good morning, everybody. (*He sits down at the table.*) I've had my coffee.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA (*to* MARIE ANDREEVNA): I hope you're not going to rush about the whole day again. Why not stay at home quietly this morning?

MARIE ANDREEVNA: I can't possibly. I'm fearfully busy. I've got an appointment in an hour's time.

BLOUM (*looking up from the newspaper*): They say Stiegelbaum's wound was so slight that he will be able to go out to-day.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: I don't expect he'll dare to go to the service in the cathedral this morning.

ROMODIN: What's the service for?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: It's a memorial service for one of our royal "martyrs."

BLOUM: No, you are wrong. They say he is going. It says so here.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: They always say that.

ROMODIN: They say that Stiegelbaum is a very brave man.

BLOUM: It's not he who is so bad, although he is tactless and stupid. It's the people who surround him—Vasiliev, for instance.

ROMODIN : He's the head of the police now, isn't he ?

BLOUM : Yes. Oh, he's a real good-for-nothing.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA : He's not normal. He's a neurasthenic. He's quite out of his mind. He ought to be shut up in an asylum.

(*Enter* SASHA, *R.*)

SASHA : There's a gentleman called to see Boris Nikolaevitch.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA : Who is it ?

SASHA : The same gentleman who called last night.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA : Ponov ?

SASHA : I don't know. The gentleman who called last night.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA : Well, tell Boris Nikolaevitch.

SASHA : But he's gone out.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA : Then tell the gentleman.

SASHA : I have told him ; but he wants to write a letter and leave it for Boris Nikolaevitch.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA : Then show him into Boris Nikolaevitch's room.

SASHA : I'm doing his room.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA : Then show him in here.

SASHA : Very well. (*She goes out R.*)

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA : Alexander Alexandrovitch always calls at such extraordinary hours—either before anyone is up or after everybody has gone to bed.

BLOUM : Naturally. He's busy all day.

ROMODIN : What is his business ?

BLOUM : It's something to do with the post office. No, I'm wrong. He's in some office, though.

ROMODIN : Government office ?

BLOUM : No ; some business, I think.

(*Enter* SASHA, *R.*)

SASHA : The gentleman sends his compliments and hopes that you will excuse him. But he hasn't time to stay. He has left a card.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA : Very well. (*To* BLOUM.) Is there any news ? (SASHA *goes out R.*)

BLOUM : The whole paper is full of nothing else but the Stiegelbaum affair. He was only slightly wounded in the foot by a piece of the shell. The man who threw the bomb was a student called Müller. He was only eighteen. Just fancy ! He was dressed as a naval officer. They saw him walking up and down the square all the morning. All the windows were broken in the square. The name of the aide-de-camp was Count Leyden.

MARIE ANDREEVNA : Oh !

BLOUM : Do you know him ?

MARIE ANDREEVNA : No, no ; I don't know him.

BLOUM : Quite a young man—only twenty-six.

(*Enter* SASHA, *R.*)

SASHA: The hall porter says there's somebody at the telephone who wants to speak to Marie Andreevna.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: I will go downstairs. (SASHA *goes out R., followed by* MARIE ANDREEVNA.)

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA (*to* BLOUM): How stupid of you to say that to Marie Andreevna about Leyden! She very likely knew him in St. Petersburg.

BLOUM: But I thought she'd given up all her aristocratic relations.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: So she has; but it's uncomfortable, all the same, for her. He was very likely a friend of her family's.

BLOUM: I'm sorry the man should be killed if he did nothing.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: Oh, it's not that I've any pity for him.

ROMODIN: Why not?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: When the wood's being cut down the chips fly about. If people go into the Government service they must take the risk.

ROMODIN: I hate all that bloodshed.

BLOUM: Dimitri Vasilevitch is becoming quite reactionary.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: We all hate the bloodshed; but when one thinks what the Government are responsible for, one can't be expected to grow sentimental over the death of one of the paid, idle aristocrats. It's disgust for all those kind of people which makes girls like Marie Andreevna leave their homes and go to the people.

BLOUM: Then why were you annoyed with me for asking Marie Andreevna?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: Oh, there are certain things men never understand.

BLOUM: Well, our aristocracy is rotten to the core.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: We haven't got an aristocracy. We've only got a bureaucratic oligarchy.

BLOUM: It's past half-past nine. I must go. (*He gets up and goes out R.*)

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA (*to* BLOUM): Don't be late for dinner to-day. We've got guests.

BLOUM: I know, I know.

ROMODIN: I suppose you won't be busy to-day, Elizaveta Ivanovna?

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: I'm not going out, if that's what you mean; but I've got more work than I can finish to do at home.

(*Enter* MARIE ANDREEVNA, *R.*)

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: Well, is the telephone working again?

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Oh, yes.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: It was out of order nearly all day yesterday. Well, I must leave you and go to my writing. Dinner at six punctually to-day, Marie Andreevna. We've got guests. (*She goes out R.*)

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Has Boris Nikolaevitch come in?

ROMODIN: Not that I know of.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Dimitri Vasilevitch, I want to tell you that I

am sorry I was cross with you just now. This is probably the last opportunity I shall ever have of talking to you.

ROMODIN: Why?

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Well, there's no reason why I shouldn't tell you now. I belong to the Moscow branch of the Social Revolutionaries. You knew that already, I suppose. Our branch had settled that a bomb was to be thrown at General Vasiliev, the head of the police, this morning, while he was on his way to the service in the cathedral. I was in it; in fact, I was chosen to throw the bomb. And now one of our people has just telephoned to me that the plot has been discovered. Nikitin has been arrested and his papers seized. All the rest of us are sure to be arrested, unless they manage to hide or to get away at once. The police may come for me at any minute. So good-bye, Dimitri Vasilevitch. I am extremely grateful for anything you have done for me. Let us part good friends, and don't think of me unkindly.

ROMODIN: It's all my fault. It is terrible.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: No, it's not terrible. There is nothing to regret. I have no regret for the past, no fear for the future. My work's not over; on the contrary, it's only just begun, and I'm full of hope. I'm very happy. If they arrest me I may be sent to prison for life. But even in prison there will be work to do. If they don't arrest me, and I get away, there will be work for me to do—abroad. In any case, I am not afraid. If my life could be lived over again I should act in exactly the same way. I would change nothing. I am infinitely grateful to you for having opened my eyes to the futility of my former life and for having shown me the path of truth.

ROMODIN: But you mustn't lose a minute. You must leave this house at once and hide.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: I expect it is too late. Besides, I couldn't go without seeing Boris Nikolaevitch. He——

ROMODIN: One moment. How was the plot found out?

MARIE ANDREEVNA: They don't know. Probably somebody's rooms were searched and papers were found—she couldn't tell me much on the telephone—or else somebody has denounced us.

ROMODIN: I knew it.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: What do you mean?

ROMODIN: It's Ponov.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: No, a thousand times no.

ROMODIN: You have been deceived, betrayed, and mocked, and so have I. They have laughed at us. He made me swear to keep silence under the pretext of saving you, and I was fool enough to believe him; and this is what has happened.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: But what do you mean?

ROMODIN: Rakint, of course.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Don't say that again. I forbid it.

ROMODIN: But it's true. Don't you see that the man is a spy and a traitor, and that he's been playing a double game the whole time?

He's simply made use of your innocence, your enthusiasm, and your infatuation to get twelve people arrested.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: It's not true. You don't understand.

ROMODIN: But I taxed him with it last night, and he as good as admitted it.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Do you mean to say that he told you he was a spy.

ROMODIN: No. But he as good as admitted it by the way in which he denied it. I mean, I am quite certain of it.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: You don't understand anything. You are simply blind with jealousy.

ROMODIN: Then you don't believe it?

MARIE ANDREEVNA (*angrily*): Certainly not.

ROMODIN: But, good gracious, the whole thing is as plain as daylight! That is why Ponov came here twice last night. Simply that Rakint might find out from you the names of the people.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: You don't understand. You know nothing. Stop, I tell you. You can't know, you can't understand. You are utterly on the wrong track. I can't explain everything to you.

ROMODIN: It is you who are blind—blind with love for that villain, that scoundrel.

MARIE ANDREEVNA (*with tears in her eyes*): And so are you—obstinate, blind, and jealous. Oh! I hate you, and I despise you! Do you hear?

(*Enter* SASHA, *R.*)

SASHA: There is a gentleman wants to see you, Marie Andreevna.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Please show him in here.

SASHA: Very well. (*She goes out R.*)

MARIE ANDREEVNA: They've come to arrest me. Good-bye, Dimitri Vasilevitch. I didn't want to quarrel with you now, but it was your fault.

(*Enter* SASHA *and* COUNT PETER ZOUROV, *R.* COUNT PETER ZOUROV *is* 45 *years old, but looks older. He has silver-grey hair; refined looking; dressed in a black frock coat. He carries his fur cap in his hand.*)

COUNT ZOUROV: How do you do, Mary?

MARIE ANDREEVNA: Uncle Peter! (ROMODIN *bows and goes out R.*)

COUNT ZOUROV: I arrived yesterday. I am staying at the Hotel Dresden, and last night I happened to meet Jameson there—that English reporter. He told me you were living here. I will go straight to the point. I am going to Florence to-night to the Palmerino. Your aunt is there, and your cousins. I want you to come with me. I have got a ticket for you.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: I can't, Uncle Peter.

COUNT ZOUROV: It's all arranged.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: I couldn't, however much I wanted to; certain things have happened which have made it impossible. I shouldn't be allowed to leave Moscow.

COUNT ZOUROV: I know what you mean. I know what you have done. I don't want to reproach you or lecture you in any way. I quite understand why you did it, and I don't think it's your fault. But you can set your mind at rest about all that. I saw Vasiliev yesterday—the head of the police. Perhaps you don't know that the plot against his life has been discovered, and the men who organised it and who so cruelly deceived you have already been arrested. And I don't mind telling you that the whole thing was a farce; half of the men in the plot were in the pay of the police, and their arrest will only be for show. The rest will be let out if they give useful information, which they are certain to do.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: It's not true.

COUNT ZOUROV: You have been the victim of a gang of unscrupulous scoundrels. I have arranged that if you go abroad now with me the whole matter will be hushed up, and I don't expect you will want to take part in this kind of thing again.

MARIE ANDREEVNA: They've lied to you. It's not true.

COUNT ZOUROV: How do you imagine that the plot could have been discovered if some of your own people hadn't told the police?

MARIE ANDREEVNA: It's all a tissue of lies. Of course, the police say that. They have said that over and over again in the past, and it never was true.

COUNT ZOUROV: I can prove it to you. (*A bell rings.*)

MARIE ANDREEVNA: There's somebody coming. Let us go into the next room. (*They go into the sitting-room, L.C.*)

(*Enter* RAKINT, *R. He rings the bell.*)

(*Enter* SASHA.)

SASHA: Did you ring, Boris Nikolaevitch?

RAKINT: Yes. Has anybody been here for me this morning?

SASHA: Yes. The gentleman who was here yesterday. He left this card. (*She gives him a card. The bell rings.*)

RAKINT: All right. (SASHA *goes out R.* RAKINT *walks up and down the room and smokes a cigarette.*)

(*Enter* PONOV, *R.*)

PONOV: At last!

RAKINT: I have just come back from your house.

PONOV: I started to come here quite early. I thought I would catch you long before you would start to come to me. I was delayed on the way, and I got here just too late. I guessed you had gone to my house. But I couldn't go back immediately as I had to see Astrov at a quarter to ten, so I telephoned from his house to say I would come back here immediately. Did they give you the message?

RAKINT: No. I started before it came.

PONOV: Well, I've got news for you. The police searched Treich's rooms last night—he's a student—and they found papers more or less giving the whole of to-day's business away. There were about seven or

eight of them in it—Nikitin amongst others. They have all been arrested.

RAKINT: Oh!

PONOV: They suspect that girl Bernova of being in it, but they found no definite mention of her. And some relation of hers, an important personage, saw Vasiliev yesterday about her.

RAKINT: Ah! Who has been arrested?

PONOV: I don't know all their names, but they are nearly all students, and there were two women among them.

(*Enter* ROMODIN, *R.*)

ROMODIN: Can I speak to you a moment?

RAKINT: I will come to your room.

PONOV: I won't keep you any longer. I am extremely busy, and I must go at once. I only wanted to tell you that the dinner had been postponed. That was all. I have got nothing else to tell you.

RAKINT: I understand. Au revoir then.

PONOV: Au revoir. (PONOV *goes out R.*)

ROMODIN: You said you would save her, and you have betrayed her. I was a fool to listen to you for one moment last night.

RAKINT: You're mistaken, Dimitri Vasilevitch.

ROMODIN (*in great excitement*): I'm not mistaken. (MARIE ANDREEVNA *opens the door, L.C. She is about to come into the room when she sees* RAKINT. *She pauses at the door.* ROMODIN *and* RAKINT *have got their backs turned to her. They do not see her. She remains spell-bound and listens.*)

ROMODIN (*continuing and gesticulating wildly*): You swore if I said nothing till to-day you would save her. You said you loved her! You! And I believed you! (*He laughs.*) Then you went straight to Ponov and denounced them all. You used Marie Andreevna as a pawn in your double game, your hellish game. Even Judas threw away his thirty pieces; but you invest yours.

RAKINT (*excited*): I swear you're mistaken, Dimitri Vasilevitch. If you knew the whole truth you would understand. Call me spy, traitor, Judas, as much as you please, but I kept my word. I was doing everything to save her, and we have prevented her arrest. But the unforeseen happened. It was not we who denounced her. Ponov has just told me that the thing was found out in a student's papers, by chance. You can ask him.

MARIE ANDREEVNA (*to* COUNT ZOUROV, *who has come to the door, L.C.*): Uncle Peter. (COUNT ZOUROV *walks in, L.C.*) I have changed my mind, Uncle Peter. I will come at once. Will you wait in that room while I get ready. I will not be a moment.

COUNT ZOUROV: Certainly. (*He goes back into the room.* MARIE ANDREEVNA *goes out, R., without looking at* RAKINT.)

RAKINT (*to* ROMODIN): What have you done?

ROMODIN: Don't go on trying to keep up the farce with me. You know perfectly well she may be arrested at any moment.

RAKINT: I swear to you it was the truth. I could have saved her, and now it's too late. (*A pistol shot is heard off R.*)

RAKINT: Ah!

ROMODIN: What was that? (*A pause.*)

(*Enter* COUNT ZOUROV, *L.C.*)

COUNT ZOUROV: What was that? It sounded like a pistol shot.

ROMODIN: Yes; it sounded like a pistol shot.

COUNT ZOUROV: We had better go and see. (COUNT ZOUROV *and* ROMODIN *rush to the door.* RAKINT *remains and sits down at the table. They are met by* ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA.)

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: God help us! Marie Andreevna has shot herself.

ROMODIN: I'll telephone for the doctor at once.

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA (*barring the way*): No, no. It's quite useless. In the head. It is all over. (RAKINT *and* ROMODIN *make a movement to the door.*)

ELIZAVETA IVANOVNA: No, don't go. You mustn't see her.

(CURTAIN.)

The Tutor

By Christopher Stone

For the first three or four days he wandered about the hotel hating everything and everybody; hating the smell of the rooms, the noise of the *table d'hôte* room, the incessant thumping of a piano in a room somewhere near his; hating the rudeness of waiters and chambermaids, resenting the ugliness of ugly men and the prettiness of pretty girls, and the general tawdriness and publicity of the hotel life. He disliked knowing so many people by sight and not being able either to avoid them or to speak to them. He had no desire to speak to them; but the frequent encounters with them in passage and lift and public room distressed and irritated him. He was an extremely irritable young man.

A grotesque, ungainly, cantankerous young man. Mrs. Pontifex, his pupil's mother, made great fun of him to her friends in recounting his eccentricities and general clumsiness.

"Worse than useless on the journey," she declared. "I assure you he was like a baby. He didn't know how much he ought to give the porters; he never could find the tickets when they were wanted—left me standing in a disgusting crowd at the *douane* at Calais; I shall never forget it to my dying day—I could have managed fifty times better by myself. And then Roger was lost, if you please! Mr. Black had no idea where he was; *he* was busy with the luggage! I said, 'The boy's your pupil; you are responsible for him; go and find him.' Luggage, indeed! The idea. As a matter of fact dear Roger was waiting for us in the train the whole time—he is so sharp, you know. As for this man Black, I was as nice as possible to him; but I told him quite straight that if he thought I was paying him in order to make my journey uncomfortable and to neglect his pupil, he was mistaken. Then he said he was not feeling very well! He was as green as my travelling cushion—I noticed it when I asked him to inflate it for me—and had been ill the whole way across the Channel. Of course, if he was a bad sailor it wasn't his fault exactly, but, still, it was very inconsiderate of him. Oh, that journey! Shall I ever forget it? He made the most

disgusting tea with my tea-basket, and was always fussing with my cushions till I told him for heaven's sake to leave me alone; and then, he *would* not keep Roger quiet; and every time I opened my eyes I saw his gargoyle of a face opposite me. And at Paris he muddled our food—we had the most revolting dinner that I've ever tasted; and he wouldn't eat anything himself, but sat opposite me trying to look ill, and succeeding. If he had been an incurable paralytic he couldn't have been more useless. He very nearly put us into the wrong train; and then in the middle of the night he woke me up at the frontier because he had forgotten to take my keys before. What am I to do with him? I can't send him home. He doesn't know the meaning of the word gumption. I honestly believe that he is a little wrong in his head—really I do. Well, look at his *face*, my dear!"

Mr. Black's face was not prepossessing. It was white and massive, very long and narrow, with exaggerated features. His nose, as Mrs. Pontifex remarked, was a limb; his upper lip a ledge, his lower lip like a red slug, his chin firm and prominent, his forehead powerful—a redeeming feature; his eyes soft and patient. If you saw him in profile you would not believe that it was the face of a man at all; if you saw him full face you would think what an extremely ugly creature. He had a habit of twiddling a small lock of hair on the top of his head with the thumb and forefinger, whenever he was thinking hard; and the lock always stood up stiff and bristly, waiting to be twiddled. He was an enormous man, six-foot-one in his socks; very ungainly, with huge bony hands, and huge flat feet; he was slightly knock-kneed, and his clothes might have been made for anyone.

"Hang it all, Mother," said Roger Pontifex, "he really is awful."

"Yes, dear, I know he is," said his mother charitably. "But then you must remember that he has not had the same opportunities as you. We must make the best of him."

That was a bad beginning. Whenever Roger committed any outrageous breach of discipline—shirked his lessons, or was rude to his tutor—he knew quite well that his mother only upheld Mr. Black half-heartedly; and he knew that she despised him in her heart quite as much as *he* did. For the first few mornings he had gone to his lessons—in Mr. Black's bedroom—punctually; from half-past nine till eleven he had struggled with Latin verbs, and had satisfactorily made his tutor do all the work. Occasionally he protested, after the

manner of schoolboys: "I never do it like that at school," or "That's a jolly silly way of learning this," or "Let's stop this now; it's awful rot." But Mr. Black, instead of sympathising and trying to make the work agreeable, had gruffly insisted on doing everything in his own way and in no other way. On the fourth evening after tea, instead of going to lessons at six o'clock, Roger had vanished upstairs and was making the acquaintance of Fritz, who looked after the "bobs" and "luges" and was just shutting up the sheds. At six-thirty he went to Mr. Black's room, and assumed an independent swaggering air as he knocked and entered.

"Where on earth have you been?" began Mr. Black. "Mrs. Pontifex has——"

"I've been talking to Fritz. He's an awfully good sort, and he says that the skating ought to be all right to-morrow. It's freezing hard now."

"I dare say. What about work?"

"Am I late?"

"Of course you are. Half an hour."

"Oh, well, I did an extra twenty minutes this morning, and we'll go on for ten minutes this evening."

"Don't let this happen again," said Mr. Black, opening a Latin prose book; "you must come at the hours that we have arranged."

The next morning Roger was late in getting up; he was in his bath at half-past nine, and when Mr. Black came along the passage in search of him, Mrs. Pontifex's maid brought out a message that Master Roger would be dressed in ten minutes. Mr. Black, slightly irritated, retired to his room and went on reading Schopenhauer. At a quarter-past ten he went again in search of his pupil. Roger's bedroom door was wide open and he was gone. He knocked at Mrs. Pontifex's door, and that lady, ready dressed for skating, opened it.

"Is Roger here?" asked Mr. Black.

"No," with raised eyebrows. "Isn't he with you?"

"I haven't seen him this morning."

"Tch, tch, too bad," said Mrs. Pontifex. "What a naughty boy he is; he must have slipped out and gone to the skating-rink. You ought to have come and fetched him."

"I *did* come once, but your maid told me that he was not up."

"No more he was; he was very lazy this morning. You must be more strict with him, or he will get into bad ways."

"I will," said Mr. Black grimly. "He was half an hour late yesterday evening."

"Was he? You never told me."

"I didn't want to bother you."

"Well, you are bothering me now, aren't you?"

"I'm very sorry. I thought he might be in your room."

"No, I haven't seen him."

"I'll go and fetch him back at once," said Mr. Black, "and punish him."

Mrs. Pontifex turned and looked out of her bedroom window.

"It seems rather a pity, doesn't it?" she said. "It's such a lovely morning, and, after all, he is out here for his health. Besides, I want him to take me on the ice."

"Very well," said Mr. Black with compressed lips, "I can keep him in after luncheon instead."

"Oh, but he promised to teach me how to luge," cried Mrs. Pontifex in dismay. "I don't think you *can* keep him indoors then. Anyhow, we'll see; I'm going out to the rink now, and I'll tell him that you are very angry with him. Only," she added over her shoulder as she went down the passage, "you really must be more severe with him."

This was the sort of thing that became a matter of daily occurrence. The weather was fine, Roger was indefatigable in all outdoor pursuits, and indefatigably *rusé* when the appointed hours for work arrived; and Mrs. Pontifex, though constantly reminding Mr. Black that he must be more strict, and constantly telling Roger at meals that he was being ruined by hotel life and was getting into very bad ways, could not help feeling that the fresh air was good for the boy and that it was more agreeable to have him naughty and in a good temper than well-behaved and sulky. As for Mr. Black, he soon came to the conclusion that he could not tackle the situation. Roger was so unfailingly rude and patronising to him that he grew to hate the hours of work as much as the boy did; he grew almost to hope that Roger would shirk, and that Mrs. Pontifex would find some plausible excuse for condoning the truancy; he grew to feel that he was not being properly treated, and that he had a grievance against them both; and at the back of his mind there was a strong feeling that it was not worth while to make such a fuss and to endure so much unpleasantness about the laborious study of some probably futile lessons. Mr. Black had his own views on education; for he was something of a philosopher, and though his ideas were not the fruit of experience, but of a large quantity of reading and of Oxford tuition, they were at any rate the result of long, painstaking, and yet desultory reflections. He disbelieved

in the classics as an appropriate pill for such intellects as that of his pupil. He regarded them as part of a convention, an educational fiction which he was expected to uphold and which he disliked intensely, being a radical in thought. "How can I honestly pretend that I think it of the slightest importance to this boy's soul whether he knows how to translate a sentence of English into good or bad Latin?" was the substance of his reflection; and to him intellectual dishonesty was fully as bad as moral dishonesty. He went further; he said to himself that the boy was better employed in learning the outside edge with diligence and enthusiasm in the open air than in labouring at Greek conjugations with disgust. And then there was his own work to be considered. The less his pupil worried him, the more time he had to go on with his German and French —the more time he could devote to his own education. Humphrey Black was an assistant master at a small private school near Broadstairs; everything—the school and the holidays tutorship—was a means to an end, a means of earning a pittance while he studied with a view to a wider sphere of activities. He dreamed of school inspectorships, of valuable work in the Board of Education some day; but not yet; he was not fit. He had been brought up with the prospect of taking holy orders and of following in his father's footsteps. But he had given that up—Oxford had given the death-blow to those aspirations, and, in consequence, a great deal of his education had been wasted. He had always been a queer boy, a feckless creature; patient and obstinate, with sudden gleams of spasmodic enterprise, which had often won him the reputation of being cantankerous. Now he was grown up and at grips with the world; vilely equipped for that struggle both by endowment and by education, with only one clear idea in his head, to work hard till he had equipped himself adequately, and then—heavens, what a relief it would be!—to give up teaching small boys. He loathed, detested teaching; the stupidity of the youthful mind, the utter lack of consideration and moral balance maddened him; and yet he hated to punish boys for their faults, just as he would hate to whip a dog.

At first he had always retired to his room after dinner and had spent the evening with his German philosophers or with a French classic and a dictionary, ending up with half an hour's Stevenson in bed. But, gathering from a casual hint that Mrs. Pontifex thought his retirement rude, he had taken to accompanying her to the hall in the evenings, where all the hotel folk congregated. This was pain and grief to him.

Mrs. Pontifex, when she was not gossiping with her friends, was invariably engaged in fitting fragments of wood together; she called it doing puzzles, and seemed to have some idea that it was a fashionable occupation. To Humphrey Black it seemed terrible that she should employ her time, evening after evening, in this fatuous way; it was as terrible as if the hours which she murdered were little babies, as if she strangled them dispassionately because it was the "latest" thing to do. Two evenings of contemplation of this massacre were enough to sicken Mr. Black; on the third he was conscious of a bleak despair, and of a great desire to scream. He was saved by no less a person than Mr. Tennant, who came up to speak to Mrs. Pontifex and to whom he was introduced. Tennant invited him to a game of chess, and Mr. Black, who recognised chess as perhaps the only game worth playing, accepted the invitation with alacrity. They went over to Tennant's favourite corner of the hall, and were soon immersed in a very fine game. People who passed their table glanced at Tennant —leaning back in his seat, with his grey eyes fixed on the board and his cigar hovering near his lips—and at Mr. Black, who craned over the table with brooding concentration and bit his pipe grimly; and they remarked to each other on the odd spectacle of that delightful Mr. Tennant making friends with that strange gawkish tutor-creature. But Tennant had met his conqueror and accepted defeat with nonchalance.

"You play a very fine game," he said, shovelling the pieces back into the box.

"I hardly ever play. It takes up so much time. There's a man who is a master at my school and is very keen; he makes me play sometimes in the evenings," said Mr. Black.

"What school is that?" asked Tennant, and finding that he knew the head master—they had, in fact, been colleagues at Winchester—soon entered into an interesting conversation with Mr. Black on scholastic matters.

"But, after all," the latter exclaimed suddenly, ruffling his hair with a bony hand, "all shop of this sort bores me. I haven't the tutorial instinct. I hate the whole pedestal convention."

"Always having to be a good example to credulous savages, you mean?" asked Tennant. "I quite agree. Only a saint or a pompous ass can do it without wincing. How do you get on with Roger Pontifex? He seems to be a nice sort of boy."

"He can be peculiarly pleasant," said Black, "when he doesn't want to be peculiarly unpleasant. To me he is

generally unpleasant. But then—I am just a stuffy room, when the sun is shining out of doors," and he smiled, as Tennant thought, rather pathetically.

"Don't you think," said the latter, "that he would be more amenable if you attacked him in the flank? I mean if you were to skate and luge with him sometimes and to win his respect—boys have *that* faculty, you know, of unbounded deification."

"If I *were* a god," said Black, laughing, "a real Homeric god, I could achieve some marvels on the skating-rink. But as it is, frankly, I'm not a 'sportsman.' I have tried; but the boy is so offensive about it—and it is really showing him my human frailties—no, no, I can't pose as a god of winter sports."

They were still laughing over this conception, Black evidently appreciating the humour of it as keenly as Tennant could, when the tutor was recalled to Mrs. Pontifex's table by plaintive signals of distress. He stuffed his pipe in his pocket—"another of his vile habits," as Mrs. Pontifex used to say to her friends—said good night to Tennant, and went across the hall.

"*Do* send Roger to bed, Mr. Black," said Mrs. Pontifex. "He is such a nuisance, and I must get this puzzle finished before I go to bed."

Roger was sedulously trying to fit pieces of wood into clearly impossible niches. He paid not the slightest attention to his tutor.

"Off to bed with you now," said Mr. Black, with the jocular manner beloved of schoolmasters, taking him by the arm; "it's half-past ten."

Roger wrenched his arm free.

"Oh, do let go," he exclaimed petulantly. "How can I put this in if you clutch hold of me?"

"Don't be rude, Roger dear," said his mother, "and I'm sure it won't go in there—will it? Oh, yes, so it does. That's better. Now I want a piece for the woman's neck."

"Half-past ten," repeated Mr. Black. "You'll never be up by nine to-morrow if you don't go now."

"Who wants to be up by nine? Oh, *Mother*, that isn't her neck, it's the man's boot. How stupid you are!"

"Now you're being rude to *me;* I wish you would go to bed."

"I'm not going till you go, so don't fuss in such a stupid way. D'you mind moving, Mr. Black? You're frightfully in my light."

"Help us, Mr. Black," said Mrs. Pontifex, "and then we shall finish all the quicker, and we can go to bed."

"All the slower you mean," retorted Roger.

They worked in silence for three minutes. The woman's neck was completed, to Mrs. Pontifex's shrill delight; and the man was fitted with boots.

"We should get on a great deal better if you didn't *always* hold your hand just over where I'm looking," said Roger to his tutor.

Mr. Black stood up, hurt and exasperated.

"I think I'll say good night," he said; "I've got some work to do." And went away.

"There now, you've offended him," said Mrs. Pontifex. "Really, dear, you must try to be more polite to him. It makes me quite ashamed of you."

"Shut up, Mother," said Roger tolerantly. "Let's get on with this."

Mr. Black, in his bedroom, trying to read a book of German philosophy, found his thoughts obsessed by the troubles of his position, by the memory of Roger's casual insults and impertinences, and of Mrs. Pontifex's feather-brained vagaries. He knew quite well that she only thought him not strict enough with Roger; that she did not in her heart blame the boy for anything; that she would even blame him because Roger had not gone to bed, or had been rude to her. Sardonically he remembered a remark that Tennant had made:

"The fact is, this air is like champagne to children. They all grow unmanageable after a week or two—ask the nurses. I expect Roger has got his tail up."

It was a phrase familiar to Mr. Black; his head master in England always used it. "That boy has got his tail up; send him along to me, Black." "One of my rules is never to let a boy get his tail up—it upsets the rest." And so on. He had had an effective way of putting the boys' tails between their legs again. And Mr. Black reflected that a touch of the birch would not do Roger Pontifex much harm. He formed a resolution that he would deal more severely with Roger the next morning. By dint of being morose and curt he managed to extract an hour and a half of sullen work out of the boy, and would have made him work after tea, too, only that Mrs. Pontifex gave a tea-party and kept Roger in the hall till it was so late that really—"Don't you think it would be better to let him off, especially as he was so good this morning?" Needless to say, rank insubordination was the result on the following day.

"I shall keep you in till lunch-time," Mr. Black threatened.

"You daren't; Mother wouldn't let you."

"Will you get this sum right, or won't you?" Mr. Black, standing over the boy, felt exactly as if he would like to box his ears.

"I won't—so there. You can't make me," said Roger hotly. "And what's more," he added, standing up, "I'm not going to work any more this morning. I'm going out."

The tutor was quite white in the face now.

"Sit down at once," he said in a voice of suppressed violence, "you lazy, ill-tempered cub."

Roger stood up to him.

"I shan't," he said; "I'm going to tell Mother."

"Very well," said Mr. Black. He shot his large hand out quickly and boxed the boy's ear. "Now go and tell your mother."

Roger did.

Mr. Black remained in his room, vividly imagining the sort of account that Roger would give of the incident. Luckily for him, however, the boy had previously annoyed his mother, and when he came to her in tears she was in no mood to sympathise with him, especially as her maid had broken one of her tortoiseshell combs and had spilt some marking-ink on her curls—both catastrophes being simultaneous. Ten minutes later Roger came back to Mr. Black's room, and after some awkward attempts at an apology for his behaviour, burst afresh into tears. Mr. Black was too much of a pedagogue to let slip such an opportunity for temperate remonstrance and appeal, and too human to resist saying at the end:

"Now that I've given you a jolly good pie-jaw, you had better go out and skate and try to forget all about it."

So Roger conceived a quite new, and only temporary, idea that his tutor was rather a sportsman after all. He informed Tennant of this fact on the ice, and found the latter more than usually friendly in consequence. Tennant taught him how to make a bracket.

Mr. Black's encounter with Mrs. Pontifex was not very satisfactory. She was still fuming with displeasure because of her maid's misadventure, and on reflection she had come to the conclusion that for anyone on earth to box her son's ears was a piece of considerable impudence.

"That's not the way to treat a boy, you know," she said; "it might make him seriously ill. His father would be furious if I told him. Roger is not used to being knocked

about by his tutors or anyone else. You can be strict, I suppose, without being violent."

"I'm very sorry about it all," said Mr. Black; "but I can't help thinking that perhaps it made him more sensible than any amount of talking."

"Well, I don't choose that it should happen again. And now that I am going away—I leave for the Riviera on Monday—and leaving you and Roger alone together, I shall be miserable if I think that you're boxing his ears and going on anyhow at him. Please promise me that you won't touch him."

"Certainly, I won't."

"You see, I want you two to be good friends," she explained, "and I want you to be much more with Roger than before. You will be responsible for him, entirely responsible. You will please write, or see that he writes to me every day. I shall only be quite happy if I know that you are skating, lugeing, ski-ing, and so on with him; in fact, that he is hardly ever out of your sight. After all," she added blandly, "that is what I pay you for, isn't it?"

Any mention of payment was enough to distress Mr. Black. He seemed to have a horror of financial matters; he had begged not to be paid weekly, because it meant the weekly torture of taking a cheque from Mrs. Pontifex. But he *did* feel that perhaps when she was at Monte Carlo, things would go more smoothly with him and Roger. There would be less distraction, less temptation to the boy to use his mother as a foil against tutorial routine.

"Now mind, Roger dear," said his mother at the station on Monday, "and be a good boy; don't be lazy over your lessons, and don't run any risks out of doors. Mr. Black," she added appealingly, in a confidential whisper, as she leaned out of the carriage window, "you *will* look after him, won't you? If he begins to cough send me a telegram and keep him indoors. And remember what I said: be more *strict* with him: keep him in order with a firm hand. Be strict without being brutal."

Mr. Black sighed with relief as he watched the head of that vivacious little lady slowly dwindling in the distance and finally withdrawn from the window and replaced by a diminutive and fluttering handkerchief. He and Roger turned back to the hotel and decided to spend the afternoon lugeing. Roger was surprisingly polite, considerate and companionable. The absence of his mother seemed to have re-adjusted the balance

between him and his tutor, and smoothed away, as it were. sub-conscious irritabilities. He was really, as Tennant had said, a very nice boy; small, thick-set, with fluffy light hair, blue eyes, not innocent of stealth and craftiness, and an air at once bland and mischievous, frank and furtive: a boy who in the loss of school-life had perhaps never learned self-control, but had certainly gained a useful gift—the gift of gratifying his whims without inconvenience to himself. And he was genuinely surprised to find how much more smoothly things went while he was alone with Mr. Black. In skating it is the same, and in swimming; you learn more quickly without a helping hand always hovering near to tempt your self-reliance.

For a week all went well; the frost was adamant, the sun shone indefatigably. Roger found that he could strike a bargain with his tutor; if he worked really hard, he need only do an hour in the morning and an hour in the evening. For, if the truth must be told, Mr. Black was just as anxious as he to get out into the sunshine. With Tennant's help he was gradually mastering the rudiments of skating, and dreamed every day of achieving a tolerable outside edge to-morrow. He could also go backwards if some one gave him a push to start him; and his antics and attitudes on the ice added sensibly to the cosmopolitan gaiety of the hotel.

With the thaw came disaster. The *föhn* wind disturbed everyone, set nerves on edge, made heads ache and tempers flicker; out in Switzerland they say that the cows all lie down when the *föhn* wind blows. M. Guyot, the manager, used to say that the south wind would make an angel grumble at the hotel food. Fritz, in the luge garage, quarrelled all day long with someone or other. International courtesies were forgotten. Englishmen said that Frenchmen had no manners at all; Frenchmen returned the compliment; both said that the Germans in the hotel were gross animals. It does not matter what the Germans said. Friction reigned at Sonchaux and titivated latent animosities. Roger Pontifex was unbearable, Mr. Black had no patience to bear with him; they nagged and squabbled all day long, sulked and nursed grievances, and then had bouts of painful and quite futile reconciliation, each hugging the consciousness that he suffered fools as gladly as possible.

"I'm going to ski this afternoon," said Roger at luncheon during a truce. "Are you coming?"

"I think I won't."

"Oh, come on; don't be a scug."

"I certainly shan't, if you talk like that."

"You know Mother said that you were to do everything with me."

"You'll be just as happy without me."

"No, I shan't."

"I'll come and watch you for a bit."

"Oh, I'll pay for skis," said Roger patronisingly, "if that's your trouble."

Mr. Black laughed sardonically. What an appalling boy!

"No, that's not my trouble," he said.

Eventually, out of pure contradictoriness, he *did* go with Roger up to the ski-ing fields, and after enduring a flood of abusive criticism directed against the skis which he had hired, the method of the fastenings, the clumsiness of his feet, the pole which he had brought, the clothes he was wearing, and the general inefficiency of him in three main respects, as a man, as a tutor, and as a skier, he found himself floundering about in the snow—which was very sticky—and wondering why in the name of all that was paralytic he was not sitting on his balcony and enjoying the sunlight and Comte's philosophy.

Presently Roger, who had been down to the bottom of the field, came plodding up to where he stood, plaintively incapable and very hot.

"I can't get along at all to-day somehow," said Mr. Black.

"You don't try," said Roger. "Keep your feet together. You know if you weren't knock-kneed . . ." He broke off. "Let's look at the bottom of your skis. Here, stick this one up."

Mr. Black tried to do so, lost his balance and fell.

"You really *are* a fool," said Roger scornfully; "you haven't even greased your skis. Of *course* you can't move."

Mr. Black had never heard of greasing skis.

"Well, you had better go back and get some grease. You can't possibly do anything if the snow cakes on your skis like that," Roger explained.

That finished Mr. Black's ski-ing exploits for the day. He was too hot and too much irritated to make any further efforts; and he disliked being called a fool, and bullied and patronised by Roger. So he told him to be sure to come in by half-past four for tea, watched him go down the slope again—"I'm going to explore down there," he shouted over his shoulder—and then returned heavily to the hotel.

There were no signs of Roger at a quarter to five. Mr. Black went out to the hall and enquired of the concierge, and then

of Fritz. No one had seen the boy. A vague uneasiness invaded Mr. Black's mind. If anything had happened to him! Conscience, combined with the *föhn* wind, made him very uncomfortable. He felt that he ought to have stayed up with Roger and kept an eye on him.

He toiled up the hillside, bareheaded and short-winded, in thin shoes. The ski-ing fields were empty. Mr. Black was suddenly afraid. He went through the deep clinging snow to the spot where he had last seen Roger, and followed the ski-tracks down the hill, running and stumbling, knee-deep and breathless, his mind full of alarming pictures of Roger, hurt, bleeding to death or even dead, somewhere on the hillside among those dark trees. He might be lying there for two hours by now.

The ski tracks crossed a foot-track made by peasants and leading, doubtless, to a cottage. Then there was a confused patch in the snow where Roger had evidently fallen. Then curious crab-like tracks where he had stepped cautiously down to the edge of the wood. Mr. Black followed among the trees, till some twenty yards further down he came to the foot-worn peasants' path again. It was very steep, and here in the shade the snow was hard and slippery. The ski-tracks followed the path downwards, but now they were not two parallel lines, but like the trail of a snow-plough, where Roger had "stemmed" violently. Mr. Black slipped and twisted his ankle. As he sat nursing it for a moment he suddenly caught sight of a single ski-track going straight down the precipice through the trees. If he had been a man of experience or even of common sense, he would have guessed that Roger had taken off his skis, and that one of them had escaped and slid over the edge of the path and vanished downwards through the trees. But he did not guess this: he was merely bewildered and frightened. Without a thought he plunged down the hill after the truant ski, clutching at tree-trunks to steady his pace and gradually understanding that he could never stop unless he ran full tilt into a tree or else sat down and slid. It was dark and cold now; and there can hardly have been in Switzerland at that moment a more grotesque human figure than that of Mr. Black frantically blundering down the twilit frozen precipice. For an appreciable moment he saw in front of him a sheer drop of some fifteen feet; he sat down instinctively just before he went over the edge, and then he just felt himself fall in a heap on to the rock-strewn bed of a half-frozen mountain torrent. He had an

excruciating shooting pain in his left leg; and it required a great effort of will for him to dare to put his hand down to it. When he did his fingers encountered a bone sticking right out of his shin which had snapped across. He drew his hand away sharply and looked up; there was a dog barking somewhere quite close to him. He summoned all the self-possession that there was in him, in his strong brow and firm chin; and as he started to drag his bruised limbs and broken leg down the gully he said to himself in an audible and disgusted tone:

"My God, Black, you *are* a damned fool."

At the cottage door he fainted, and when Johann, the guide, who lived there, came out and found him, the dog was straining at its chain to reach the trickle of blood which stained the muddy snow.

Roger was of all possible nurses and pupils the most attentive, sedulous and contrite. When Mr. Black was recovering and lying out on his balcony, Roger would rather ostentatiously come and work at his lessons beside him. He certainly made up for all the hours that he had missed, and for all the hard thoughts and hard words of which he had been guilty.

"Going on splendidly," said Tennant to Mrs. Pontifex on one of the early days of the illness, when he had been in to see Mr. Black. "Poor chap, I'm awfully sorry for him. And he is so worried because he is a nuisance to you."

"Well, I must say," said Mrs. Pontifex, "though of course I don't complain—I've had trouble all my life, and I'm used to it—I must say that I think he ought to be rather worried. It is all so senseless, so feckless. Here am I—my holiday entirely spoilt—I only had a week at Monte Carlo. And now I suppose I shall have to stop here nursing him—or, at any rate, paying for him. And one of his sisters arrives to-morrow, and, if she is anything like him, *that* won't be very pleasant, will it? Of course, I don't complain, but it does seem rather hard on me. And—and fancy breaking your leg like that! Why couldn't he be more careful? *Roger* didn't go down that place after his ski; he walked round by the path, as anybody with a grain of gumption would. And this is the result. Of course, he had no right to allow Roger to go off gallivanting about on those horrid things. As I said all along, he ought to be more *strict*. Oh, well, it's no use grumbling. I must grin and bear it and pay. I shouldn't wonder if I'm obliged to pay the doctor, too! Such is life! And I was having such a delightful time at Monte."

Tennant looked at her very quietly while she was speaking. When she stopped, he stroked his moustache and looked out of the corridor window. Then his eyes came round to her again, and there was a twinkle in them.

"All the same," he said, "I'm afraid that my sympathies are entirely with Mr. Black."

Under Western Eyes*

By Joseph Conrad

PART FOUR. II

"PERHAPS life is just that," reflected Razumov, pacing to and fro under the trees of the little island, all alone with the bronze statue of Rousseau. "A dream and a fear." The dusk deepened. The pages written over and torn out of his note-book were the first-fruit of his "mission." No dream that. They contained the assurance that he was on the eve of real discoveries. "I think there is no longer anything in the way of my being completely accepted."

He had resumed his impressions in those pages, some of the conversations. He even went so far as to write: "By the by, I have discovered the personality of that terrible N. N. A horrible, paunchy brute. If I hear anything of his future movements I shall send a warning."

The futility of all this overcame him like a curse. Even then he could not believe in the reality of his mission. He looked round despairingly, as if for some way to redeem his existence from that unconquerable feeling. He crushed angrily in his hand the pages of the notebook. "This must be posted," he thought.

He gained the bridge and returned to the north shore, where he remembered having seen in one of the narrower streets a little obscure shop stocked with cheap wood carvings, its walls lined with extremely dirty cardboard-bound volumes of a small circulating library. They sold stationery there, too. A morose shabby old man dozed behind the counter. A thin woman in black, with a sickly face, produced the envelope he had asked for without even looking at him. Razumov thought that these people were safe to deal with because they no longer cared for anything in the world. He addressed the envelope on the counter with the German name of a certain person living in Vienna. But Razumov knew that this, his first

* Copyright, 1911

communication for Councillor Mikulin, would find its way to the Embassy there, be copied in cypher by somebody trustworthy, and sent on to its destination, all safe, along with the diplomatic correspondence. That was the arrangement contrived to cover up the track of the information from all unfaithful eyes, from all indiscretions, from all mishaps and treacheries. It was to make him safe—absolutely safe.

He wandered out of the wretched shop and made for the post office. It was then that I saw him for the second time that day. He was crossing the Rue Mont Blanc with every appearance of an aimless stroller. He did not recognise me, but I made him out at some distance. He was very good-looking, I thought, this remarkable friend of Miss Haldin's brother. I watched him go up to the letter-box and then retrace his steps. Again he passed me very close, but I am certain he did not see me that time, either. He carried his head well up, but he had the expression of a somnambulist struggling with the very dream which drives him forth to wander in dangerous places. My thoughts reverted to Natalia Haldin, to her mother. To them he seemed to be all that was left of their son and brother.

The westerner in me was discomposed. There was something shocking in the expression of that face. Had I been myself a conspirator, a Russian political refugee, I could have perhaps been able to draw some practical conclusion from this chance glimpse. As it was, it only discomposed me strongly, even to the extent of awakening an indefinite apprehension in regard to Natalia Haldin. All this is rather inexplicable, but such was the origin of the purpose I formed there and then to call on these ladies in the evening, after my solitary dinner. It was true that I had met Miss Haldin only a few hours before, but Mrs. Haldin herself I had not seen for some considerable time. The truth is, I had shirked calling of late.

Poor Mrs. Haldin! I confess she frightened me a little. She was one of those natures, rare enough, luckily, in which one cannot help being interested, because they provoke both terror and pity. One dreads their contact for oneself, and still more for those one cares for, so clear it is that they are born to suffer and to make others suffer, too. It is strange to think that, I won't say liberty, but the mere liberalism of outlook which for us is a matter of words, of ambitions, of votes (and if of feeling at all, then of the sort of feeling which leaves our deepest affections untouched), may be for other beings very much like ourselves and living under the same

sky, a heavy trial of fortitude, a matter of tears and anguish and blood. Mrs. Haldin had felt the pangs of her own generation. There was that enthusiast brother of hers—the officer they shot under Nicholas. A faintly ironic resignation is no armour for a vulnerable heart. Mrs. Haldin, struck at through her children, was bound to suffer afresh from the past, and to feel the anguish of the future. She was of those who do not know how to heal themselves, of those who are too much aware of their heart, who, neither cowardly nor selfish, look passionately at its wounds—and count the cost.

Such thoughts as these seasoned my modest, lonely bachelor's meal. If anybody wishes to remark that this was a roundabout way of thinking of Natalia Haldin, I can only retort that she was well worth some concern. She had all her life before her. Let it be admitted, then, that I was thinking of Natalia Haldin's life in terms of her mother's character, a manner of thinking of a girl permissible for an old man, not too old yet to have become a stranger to pity. There was almost all her youth before her; a youth robbed arbitrarily of its natural lightness and joy, overshadowed by an un-European despotism; a terribly sombre youth given over to the hazards of a furious strife between equally ferocious antagonisms.

I lingered over my thoughts more than I should have done. One felt so helpless, and even worse—so unrelated in a way. At the last moment I hesitated as to going there at all. What was the good?

All this made me late, and the evening was already advanced when, turning into the Boulevard des Philosophes, I saw the light in the window at the corner. The blind was down, but I could imagine behind it Mrs. Haldin seated in the chair, in her usual attitude, as if looking out for someone, which had lately acquired the poignant quality of a mad expectation.

I thought that I was sufficiently authorised by the light to knock at the door. The ladies had not retired as yet. I only hoped they would not have any visitors of their own nationality. A broken-down, retired Russian official was to be found there sometimes in the evening. He was infinitely forlorn and wearisome by his mere dismal presence. I think these ladies tolerated his frequent visits because of an ancient friendship with Mr. Haldin, the father, or something of that sort. I made up my mind that if I found him prosing away there in his feeble voice I should remain but a very few minutes.

The door surprised me by swinging open before I could

ring the bell. I was confronted by Miss Haldin, in hat and jacket, obviously on the point of going out. At that hour! For the doctor perhaps?

Her exclamation of welcome reassured me. It sounded as if I had been the very man she wanted to see. My curiosity was awakened. She drew me in, and the faithful Anna, the elderly German maid, closed the door, but did not go away afterwards. She remained near it as if in readiness to let me out presently. It appeared that Miss Haldin had been on the point of going out to find me.

She spoke in a hurried manner very unusual with her. She would have gone straight and rung at Mrs. Ziegler's door, late as it was, for Mrs. Ziegler's habits . . .

Mrs. Ziegler, the widow of a distinguished professor who was an intimate friend of mine, lets me have three rooms out of her very large and fine apartment, which she didn't give up after her husband's death; but I have my own entrance opening on the same landing. It was an arrangement of at least ten years' standing. I said that I was very glad that I had the idea to . . .

Miss Haldin made no motion to take off her outdoor things. I observed her heightened colour, something pronouncedly resolute in her tone. Did I know where Mr. Razumov lived?

Where Mr. Razumov lived! Mr. Razumov! At this hour —so urgently! I threw my arms up in sign of utter ignorance. I had not the slightest idea where he lived. If I could have foreseen her question only three hours ago, I might have ventured to ask him on the pavement before the new post office building, and possibly he would have told me, but very possibly, too, he would have dismissed me rudely to mind my own business. And possibly, I thought, remembering that extraordinary hallucined, anguished, and absent expression, he might have fallen down in a fit from the shock of being spoken to. I said nothing of all this to Miss Haldin, not even mentioning that I had a glimpse of the young man so recently. The impression had been so extremely unpleasant that I would have been glad to forget it myself.

"I don't see where I could make inquiries," I murmured helplessly. I would have been glad to be of use in any way and would have set off to fetch any man, young or old, for I had the greatest confidence in her common sense. "What made you think of coming to me for that information?" I asked.

"It wasn't exactly for that," she said in a low voice. She had the air of some one confronted by an unpleasant task.

"Am I to understand that you must communicate with Mr. Razumov this evening?"

Natalia Haldin moved her head affirmatively; then, after a glance at the door of the drawing-room, said in French:

"*C'est Maman*," and remained perplexed for a moment. Always serious, not a girl to be put out by any imaginary difficulties, my curiosity was suspended on her lips, which remained closed for a moment. What was Mr. Razumov's connection with this mention of her mother? Mrs. Haldin had not been informed of her son's friend's arrival in Geneva.

"May I hope to see your mother this evening?" I inquired.

Miss Haldin extended her hand as if to bar the way.

"She is in a terrible state of agitation. Oh, you would not be able to detect. . . . It's inward, but I who know Mother, I am appalled. I haven't the courage to face it any longer. It's all my fault; I suppose I cannot play a part; I've never before hidden anything from Mother. There has never been an occasion for anything of that sort between us. But you know yourself the reason why I refrained from telling her at once of Mr. Razumov's arrival here. You understand, don't you? Owing to her unhappy state. And—there—! I am no actress. My own feelings being strongly engaged, I somehow . . . I don't know. She noticed something in my manner. She thought I was concealing something from her. She noticed my longer absences, and in fact, as I have been meeting Mr. Razumov daily, I used to stay away longer than usual when I went out. Goodness knows what suspicions arose in her mind. You know that she has not been herself ever since. . . . So this evening she—who has been so awfully silent for weeks—began to talk all at once. She said that she did not want to reproach me; that I had my character as she had her own; that she did not want to pry into my affairs or even into my thoughts; for her part, she had never had anything to conceal from her children . . . cruel things to listen to. And all this in her quiet voice, with that poor, wasted face as calm as a stone. It was unbearable."

Miss Haldin talked in an undertone and more rapidly than I had ever heard her speak before. That in itself was disturbing. The ante-room being strongly lighted, I could see under the veil the heightened colour of her face. She stood erect, her left hand was resting lightly on a small table. The other hung by her side without stirring. Now and then she caught her breath slightly.

"It was too startling. Just fancy! She thought that I was making preparations to leave her without saying anything. I knelt by the side of her chair and entreated her to think of what she was saying! She put her hand on my head, but she persists in her delusion all the same. She had always thought that she was worthy of her children's confidence, but apparently it was not so. Her son could not trust her love if not her understanding—and now I was planning to abandon her in the same cruel and unjust manner, and so on, and so on. Nothing I could say . . . It is morbid obstinacy. . . . She said that she felt there was something, some change in me. . . . If my convictions were calling me away, why this secrecy, as though she had been a coward or a weakling not safe to trust? 'As if my heart could play traitor to my children,' she said. . . . It was hardly to be borne. And she was smoothing my head all the time. . . . It was perfectly useless to protest. She is ill. Her very soul is . . ."

I did not venture to break the silence which fell between us. I looked into her eyes glistening through the veil.

"I! Changed!" she exclaimed in the same low tone. "My convictions calling me away! It was cruel to hear this, because my trouble is that I am weak and cannot see what I ought to do. You know that. And to end it all I did a selfish thing. To remove her suspicions of myself I told her of Mr. Razumov. It was selfish of me. You know we were completely right in agreeing to keep the knowledge away from her. Perfectly right. Directly I told her of our poor Victor's friend being here I saw how right we have been. She ought to have been prepared; but in my distress I just blurted it out. Mother got terribly excited at once. How long has he been here? What did he know, and why did he not come to see us at once, this friend of her Victor? What did that mean? Was she not to be trusted even with such memories as there were left of her son? . . . Just think how I felt seeing her, white like a sheet, perfectly motionless, with her thin hands gripping the arms of the chair. I told her it was all my fault."

I could imagine the motionless dumb figure of the mother in her chair, there, behind the door, near which the daughter was talking to me. The silence in there seemed to call aloud for vengeance against an historical fact and the modern instances of its working. That view flashed through my mind, but I could not doubt that Miss Haldin had had an atrocious time of it. I quite understood when she said that she could not face the night upon the impression of that scene. Mrs. Haldin

had given way to most awful imaginings, to most fantastic and cruel suspicions. All this had to be lulled at all costs and without loss of time. It was no shock to me to learn that Miss Haldin had said to her, " I will go and bring him here at once." There was nothing absurd in that cry, no exaggeration of sentiment. I was not even doubtful in my " Very well, but how ? "

It was perfectly right that she should think of me, but what could I do in my ignorance of Mr. Razumov's quarters.

" And to think he may be living near by, within a stone's-throw perhaps," she exclaimed.

I doubted it ; but I would have gone off cheerfully to fetch him from the other end of Geneva. I suppose she was certain of my readiness, since her first thought was to come to me. But the service she meant to ask of me really was to accompany her to the Château Borel.

I had an unpleasant mental vision of the dark road, of the sombre grounds, and the desolately suspicious aspect of that home of necromancy and intrigue and feminist adoration. I objected that Mme. de S—— most likely would know nothing of what we wanted to find out. Neither did I think it likely that the young man would be found there. I remembered my glimpse of his face, and somehow gained the conviction that a man who looked worse than if he had seen the dead would want to shut himself up somewhere where he could be alone. I felt a strange certitude that Mr. Razumov was going home when I saw him.

" It is really of Peter Ivanovitch that I was thinking," said Miss Haldin quietly.

Ah ! He, of course, would know. I looked at my watch. It was twenty minutes past nine only. . . . Still.

" I would try his hotel then," I advised. " He has rooms at the Cosmopolitan, somewhere on the top floor."

I did not offer to go by myself, simply from mistrust of the reception I should meet with. But I suggested the faithful Anna, with a note asking for the information.

Anna was still waiting by the door at the other end of the room, and we two discussed the matter in whispers. Miss Haldin thought she must go herself. Anna was timid and slow. Time would be lost in bringing back the answer, and from that point of view it was getting late, for it was by no means certain that Mr. Razumov lived near by.

" If I go myself," Miss Haldin argued, " I can go straight to him from the hotel. And in any case I should have to go

out, because I must explain to Mr. Razumov personally—prepare him in a way. You have no idea of Mother's state of mind."

Her colour came and went. She even thought that both for her mother's sake and for her own it was better that they should not be together for a little time. Anna, whom her mother liked, would be at hand.

"She could even take her sewing into the room. Mother won't mind," Miss Haldin continued as I followed her to the door. Then, addressing in German the maid who opened it before us: "You may tell my mother that this gentleman called and is gone with me to find Mr. Razumov. She must not be uneasy if I am away for some length of time."

We passed out quickly at the big house-door, and she took deep breaths of the cool night air. "I did not even ask you," she murmured.

"I should think not," I said with a laugh. The manner of my reception by the great feminist could not be considered now. That he would be annoyed to see me, and probably treat me to some solemn insolence, I had no doubt, but I supposed that he would not absolutely dare to throw me out. And that was all I cared for. "Won't you take my arm?" I asked.

She did so without a word, and neither of us spoke till I let her go first into the great hall of the hotel. It was brilliantly lighted, and with a good many people lounging about.

"I could very well go up there without you," I suggested.

"I don't like to be left waiting in this place," she said in a low voice. "I will come too."

I led her straight to the lift then. At the top floor the attendant directed us to the right: "End of the corridor."

The walls were white, the carpet red, electric lights blazed in profusion, and the emptiness, the silence, the closed doors all alike and numbered, made me think of the perfect order of some severely luxurious model penitentiary on the solitary confinement principle. Up there under the roof of that enormous pile for housing travellers no sound of any kind reached us, the thick crimson felt muffled our footsteps completely. We hastened on, not looking at each other till we found ourselves before the very last door of that long passage. Then our eyes met, and we stood thus for a moment lending ear to a faint murmur of voices inside.

"I suppose this is it," I whispered unnecessarily. I saw Miss Haldin's lips move soundlessly, and after my sharp knock the murmur of voices inside ceased. A profound stillness lasted

for a few seconds, and then the door was brusquely opened by a short, black-eyed woman in a red blouse, with a great lot of nearly white hair, done up negligently in an untidy and picturesque manner. Her thin, jetty eyebrows were drawn together. I learned afterwards with interest that she was the famous—or the notorious—Sophia Antonovna, but I was struck then by the quaint Mephistophelian character of her inquiring glance, because it was so curiously evil-less, so—I may say—un-devilish. It got softened still more as she looked up at Miss Haldin, who stated, in her gentle, even voice, her wish to see Peter Ivanovitch for a moment.

"I am Miss Haldin," she added.

At this, with her brow completely smoothed out now, but without a word in answer, the woman in the red blouse walked away to a sofa and sat down, leaving the door wide open.

And from the sofa, her hands lying on her lap, she watched us enter, with her black, glittering eyes.

Miss Haldin advanced into the middle of the room; I, faithful to my part of mere attendant, remained by the door after closing it behind me. The room, quite a large one, but with a low ceiling, was scantily furnished, and an electric bulb with a porcelain shade pulled low down over a big table (with a very large map spread on it) left its distant parts in a dim, artificial twilight. Peter Ivanovitch was not to be seen, neither was Mr. Razumov present. But, on the sofa, near Sophia Antonovna, a bony-faced man with a goatee beard leaned forward with his hands on his knees, staring frankly with faded, kindly eyes. In a remote corner a bulky shape and a broad, pale face could be made out, uncouth, and as if insecure on the low seat on which it rested. The only person known to me was little Julius Laspara, who seemed to have been poring over the map, with his feet twined tightly round the chair-legs. He got down briskly and bowed to Miss Haldin, looking absurdly like a small hook-nosed boy with a beautiful false pepper-and-salt beard. He advanced, offering his seat, which Miss Haldin declined. She had only come in for a moment to say a few words to Peter Ivanovitch.

His high-pitched voice became painfully accented in the room.

"Strangely enough I was thinking of you this very afternoon, Natalia Victorovna. I met Mr. Razumov. I asked him to write me an article on anything he liked. You could translate it into English—with such a teacher."

He nodded complimentarily in my direction. At the name

of Razumov an indescribable sound, a sort of feeble squeak, as of some angry small animal, was heard in the corner occupied by the man who seemed much too bulky for the chair on which he sat. I did not hear what Miss Haldin said. It was Laspara who spoke again.

"It's time to do something, Natalia Victorovna. But I suppose you have your own ideas. Why not write something yourself. Suppose you came to see us soon? We could talk it over. Any advice . . ."

Again I did not catch Miss Haldin's words. It was Laspara's voice once more.

"Peter Ivanovitch? He's retired for a moment into the other room. We are all waiting for him."

The great man, entering at that moment, looked bigger, taller, quite imposing in a long dressing-gown of some dark stuff. It descended in straight lines down to his feet. He suggested a monk or a prophet, a robust figure of some desert-dweller—something Asiatic; and the dark glasses in conjunction with this costume made him more mysterious than ever in the subdued light.

Little Laspara went back to his chair to look at the map, the only brilliantly lit object in the room. Even from my distant position by the door I could make out, mainly by the shape of the blue part representing the water, that it was a map of the Baltic provinces. Peter Ivanovitch exclaimed slightly, advancing towards Miss Haldin, checked himself on perceiving me, very vaguely no doubt, and peered with his dark, bespectacled stare. He must have recognised me by my grey hair, because, with a marked shrug of his broad shoulders, he turned to Miss Haldin in benevolent indulgence. He seized her hand, and put his other big paw like a lid over it.

While those two standing in the middle of the floor were exchanging a few inaudible phrases no one else moved in the room: Laspara, with his back to us, kneeling on the chair, his elbows propped on the big-scale map, the shadowy enormity in the corner, the frankly staring man with the goatee on the sofa, the woman in the red blouse by his side—not one of them stirred. I suppose that really they had no time, for Miss Haldin withdrew her hand immediately, and before I was ready for her was moving to the door. A disregarded westerner, I threw it open hurriedly and followed her out, my last glance as I was closing the door leaving them all motionless in their varied poses. Peter Ivanovitch alone standing up, with his dark glasses, like an enormous blind teacher, and behind him the

vivid patch of light on the coloured map, pored over by the diminutive Laspara.

Later on, much later on, at the time of the newspaper rumours (they were vague and soon died out) of an abortive military conspiracy in Russia, I remembered the glimpse I had of that motionless group with its central figure. Planned as an attempt to seize power, it was to break out at a great review. No details ever came out, but it was known that the revolutionary parties abroad had given their assistance, had sent emissaries in advance, that even money was found to dispatch a steamer with a cargo of arms and conspirators to invade the Baltic provinces. And while my eyes scanned the imperfect disclosures (in which the world was not much interested) I thought that the old, settled Europe had been given in my person attending that Russian girl something like a glimpse behind the scenes. A short, strange glimpse on the top floor of a great hotel of all places in the world : the great man himself, the motionless great bulk in the corner of the slayer of spies and gendarmes ; Yakovlitch, the veteran of ancient terrorist campaigns ; the woman, with her hair as white as mine and the lively black eyes, all in a mysterious half-light, with the strongly lighted map of Russia on the table. The woman I had the opportunity to see again. As we were waiting for the lift she came hurrying along the corridor, with her eyes fastened on Miss Haldin's face, and drew her aside as if for a confidential communication. It was not long. A few words only.

Going down in the lift Natalia Haldin did not break the silence. It was only when out of the hotel and as we moved along the quay in the fresh darkness spangled by the quay lights, reflected in the black water of the little port on our left hand, and with lofty piles of hotels on our right, that she spoke.

"That was Sophia Antonovna—you know the woman . . ."

"Yes, I know—the famous . . ."

"The same. It appears that after we went out Peter Ivanovitch told them why I had come. That was the reason she came out after us. She named herself to me, and then she said, 'You are the sister of a brave man who shall be remembered. You may see better times.' I told her I hoped to see the time when all this would be forgotten, even if the name of my brother were to be forgotten, too. Something moved me to say that, but you understand ? "

"Yes," I said. "You think of the era of concord and justice. The destructors should be anonymous."

"Yes. There is too much hate and revenge in that work.

It must be done. It is a sacrifice—and so let it be all the greater. Destruction is the work of anger. Let the tyrants and the slayers be forgotten together and only the reconstructors be remembered."

"And did Sophia Antonovna agree with you?" I asked sceptically.

"She did not say anything except, 'It is good for you to believe in love.' I should think she understood me. Then she asked me if I hoped to see Mr. Razumov presently. I said I trusted I could manage to bring him to see my mother this evening, as my mother had learned of his being here and was morbidly impatient to learn if he could tell us something of Victor. He was the only friend of my brother we knew of and a great intimate. She said, 'Oh! Your brother—yes. Please tell Mr. Razumov that I have made known the story which came to me from St. Petersburg. It concerns your brother's arrest,' she added. 'He was betrayed by a man of the people who has since hanged himself. Mr. Razumov will explain it all to you. I gave him the full information this afternoon. And please tell Mr. Razumov that Sophia Antonovna sends him her greetings. I am going away early in the morning—far away.'"

And Miss Haldin added after a moment of silence:

"I was so moved by what I heard so unexpectedly that I simply could not speak to you before. . . . A man of the people! Oh, our poor people!"

She walked slowly, as if tired out suddenly, her head drooped; from the windows of a building with terraces and balconies came the banal sound of hotel music. Before the low mean portals of the Casino two red posters blazed under the electric lamps, with a cheap provincial effect. And the emptiness of the quays, the desert aspect of the streets, had an air of hypocritical respectability and of inexpressible dreariness.

I had taken for granted she had obtained the address, and let myself be guided by her. On the Mont Blanc bridge, where a few dark figures seemed lost in the wide and long perspective defined by the lights, she said:

"It isn't very far from our house. I somehow thought it couldn't be. The address is Rue de Carouge. I think it must be one of those big, new houses for artisans."

She took my arm confidently, familiarly, and accelerated her pace. There was something primitive in all her proceedings. She did not think of the resources of civilisation. A late tramcar overtook us; a row of *fiacres* stood by the railing of

the gardens. It never entered her head to make use of these conveyances. Neither did it enter mine. She was too hurried perhaps, and as to myself—well, she had taken my arm confidingly. As we were ascending the easy incline of the Corraterie, all the shops shuttered and no light in any of the windows (as if all the mercenary population had fled at the end of the day), she said, tentatively :

" I could run in for a moment to have a look at Mother. It would not be much out of the way."

I dissuaded her. If Mrs. Haldin really expected to see Razumov that night it would have been unwise to show herself without him. The sooner we got hold of the young man and brought him along to calm her mother's agitation the better. She assented to my reasoning and we crossed diagonally the Place de Théâtre, all grey with its floor of slabs of stone, under the electric lamps, and the lonely equestrian statue all black in the middle. In the Rue de Carouge we were in the poorer quarters and approaching the outskirts of the town. Vacant building plots alternated with high, new houses. At the corner of a side street, cutting its unpaved roadway through a dark wilderness of waste ground, the crude light of a whitewashed shop fell into the night, fan-like, through a wide doorway. One could see from a distance the inner wall with its scantily furnished shelves, and the deal counter painted brown. That was the house. Approaching it along the dark stretch of a fence of tarred planks, we saw the narrow pallid face of the cut angle, five windows high, without a gleam in them, and crowned by the heavy shadow of a jutting roof slope.

" We must inquire in the shop," Miss Haldin directed me.

A sallow, thinly whiskered man, wearing a dingy white collar and a frayed tie, laid down a black, smudgy newspaper, and, leaning familiarly on both elbows far over the bare counter, answered that the person I was inquiring for was indeed his *locataire* on the third floor, but that for the moment he was out.

" For the moment," I repeated, after a glance at Miss Haldin. " Does this mean that you expect him back at once ? "

He was very gentle, with ingratiating eyes and soft lips. He smiled faintly as though he knew all about everything. Mr. Razumov, after being absent all day, had returned early in the evening. He was very surprised about half an hour or a little more since to see him come down again. Mr. Razumov left his key, and in the course of some words which passed

between them had remarked that he was going out because he needed air.

From behind the bare counter he went on smiling at us, his head held between his hands. Air. Air. But whether that meant a long or a short absence it was difficult to say. The night was very close certainly.

After a pause, his ingratiating eyes turned to the door, he added :

" The storm shall drive him in."

" There's going to be a storm ? " I asked.

" Why, yes ! "

As if to confirm his words we heard a very distant, deep rumbling noise.

Consulting Miss Haldin by a glance, I saw her so reluctant to give up her quest that I asked the shopkeeper, in case Mr. Razumov came home within half an hour, to beg him to remain downstairs in the shop. We would look in again presently.

For all answer he moved his head imperceptibly. The approval of Miss Haldin was expressed by her silence. We walked slowly down the street, away from the town ; the low garden walls of the modest villas doomed to demolition were overhung by the boughs of trees and masses of foliage, lighted from below by gas lamps. The violent and monotonous noise of the icy Arve falling over a low dam swept towards us with a chilly draught of air over a great open space, where a double line of lamp-lights defined a street as yet without houses. But on the other shore, overhung by the thunder-cloud, a solitary dim light, low in the complete darkness, seemed to watch us with a steady stare. When we had strolled as far as the bridge, I said :

" We had better get back. . . ."

In the shop the sickly man was studying the smudgy newspaper, now spread out largely on the counter. He just raised his head when I looked in and shook it negatively, pursing up his lips. I rejoined Miss Haldin outside at once and we moved off at a brisk pace. She remarked that she would send Anna with a note the first thing in the morning. I respected her taciturnity, silence being perhaps the best way to show my concern.

The semi-rural street we followed on our return changed gradually to the usual town thoroughfare, broad and deserted. We did not meet four people altogether, and the way seemed interminable, because my companion's natural anxiety had communicated itself sympathetically to me. At last we turned into the Boulevard des Philosophes, more wide, more empty,

more dead—the very desolation of slumbering respectability. At the sight of the two lighted windows, very conspicuous from afar, I had the mental vision of Mrs. Haldin in her armchair keeping a dreadful, tormenting vigil under the evil spell of an arbitrary rule, a victim of tyranny and revolution, a sight at once cruel and absurd.

(To be continued)

"Surrey in Danger"

August 10, 1911

I HAD tea on the terrace of the House that memorable day, and the little function was as pleasant as usual. The Thames flowed staidly on below, calm and muddy. Mr. Lloyd George, spruce and cheery, was chatting volubly to a constituent. There was Mr. T. P. O'Connor lazily being photographed against the wall of St. Stephen's in a group. There was Mr. John Burns, looking as honest and hale as in the days of the "tanner" strike. There were one or two smart people about, some French frocks, some pretty faces. But of Runnimede no sign. At a table near by a celebrated lady novelist sat entertaining her admirers. Everything and everybody wore their daily garb and habiture, even as (we were told) the countenance of Lord Rosebery in the stifling atmosphere of the House of Lords, staring blankly and persistently at the barrelled ceiling.

In the streets there was no trace of excitement. The usual listless air of the Britisher lay upon the faces of all whom I saw in the large restaurant where I dined later in the evening, while I sat and dwelt upon the French Revolution. August 10th. Yes, it was the anniversary of the burning of the Tuileries in 1792, when the French Monarchy came to an end. I thought of Russia in 1905; the scenes I had witnessed there, Gapon, the bombs, the Cossacks, the wild English interest in the Russian workmen's emancipation war that etiolated in the establishment of a dummy Duma. Then, with Cromwell upmost in my thoughts, I set out for the news.

"Surrey in danger." I stared at the bill in astonishment. Not the great debate in the Lords; not the serious crisis in Morocco, threatening European conflagration; not the dockers' strike, then at its height, occupied the bill, but that matter of far more serious interest to the community—the momentous fact of "Surrey's danger." Suddenly I seemed to understand.

Of course, the sub-editor who billed "Surrey's danger" was indisputably, superbly right; the man was a bit of a genius. No one in London, out of Parliament and newspaper offices, was thinking about the forlorn-hope action fought by Lord Halsbury and his merry men; of the swan-songs, valedictory orations, accusatory, explanatory or vindicatory speeches upon the recognised anomalous and atrophied privileges of the Lords; of who on that night died hard or who didn't, seeing that the case was a prejudged one, and that it was "no earthly" any more. No man was thinking about Morocco, for is not that the exclusive business of our secret Foreign Office and, eventually, of the British Navy? No man was thinking of the strike of 75,000 men on Tower Hill, except those directly concerned in the pother, or prospectively, as it affected the stomach. Those things were local, personal, controversial. The central fact in London that evening was the news of "Surrey's danger."

At last we heard. Feverishly I bought a newspaper—seventeen, the greatest and oldest institution in England was dead, signed away by a packed majority of seventeen! I met a friend. His composure reassured me. "A close thing," he observed. "I say, they've been making it hot for Surrey."

Surrey again! At the club I met another man, and together we went here and there observing, testing, finally settling down to supper in what he called a gay place. It was gay after a fashion, very hot, very noisy, and very full. The *Crème de Menthe frappé* stimulated my thoughts. I wanted to talk about the stupendous thing done, the great questions of the hour, but neither he nor any of his friends nor anyone in the restaurant would hear of it. In despair I turned to the intelligent head-waiter, who once told me he considered Oliver Goldsmith a finer writer than George Meredith. "It's seventeen," I observed dramatically. For a moment he looked nonplussed, but only for a moment. "It's seventeen to one on Bottomley," he retorted.

And so they died, as the admirable Bagehot years ago prophesied that the Lords would die, "not of assassination, but atrophy; not abolition, but decline," and on that evening nobody seemed a penny the worse. Yet August 10th will

surely be a charter in the nation's history. Once more the spirit of the English Constitution, based upon the principle of choosing a single sovereign authority, was *made good*, putting an end to the legicidal sway of the Peers, who ever since their rejection of Gladstone's Home Rule Bill have usurped the rights of the days of Chatham and Walpole as a co-equal and dominating branch in the Legislature. The passing of the Parliament Bill was no mere act of party opportunism. It ended at once an abuse and a revolution, the abuse of the veto recognised ever since the Reform Bill of 1832 as hypothetical, the revolution inaugurated by the Conservative capitalistic movement of Tariff Reform. So with all London listless and indifferent, seventeen Peers of the Realm signed away the hereditary principle of the Upper House, and with it the tradition of seven hundred years of feudal privilege and custom; and it was done, as would seem the way of modern revolution, bloodlessly, almost tiresomely, without affecting the betting on a single horse, or the gate-money of a single cricket-match, or the tee-shot of a single golfer in the country.

What a few years ago seemed, even to the staunchest Radical, a thing of dreams and fantasy, took place quietly on that night and left no surface-mark on the great face of London. The strange, the magnificent thing about it all was this sublime quiet and indifference. And the reason is obvious. Judgment had already been passed. We are a sporting, a law-loving, a practical people. The merits of the question had been adjudicated upon finally at the last General Elections. The Liberals were returned with the mandate, and their constituents confidently expected them to do their duty. Sentence in England exacts its inexorable penalty; and though, no doubt, a mild interest existed as to the mode of procedure, there was as little sympathy, excitement, or expectancy about the battle of the "Die-Hards" as there would have been had "specials" appeared at midnight in Piccadilly Circus with the catastrophic creation of five hundred tradesmen. The creation would have offended nobody except perhaps the Peers themselves and their families. What difference, after all, is there between a penal peer created *ad hoc* and, say, a wealthy brewer in the ordinary run of things, created for service? To the modern board-school educated Englishman—and he is the new man, the silent clue, the new force in the body politic—practically none whatever. The candle of the House of Lords

that night went out, as candles do when there is nothing more to burn in the socket.

Looking back to-day calmly, and in no party spirit, the incredible folly of those responsible for the defeat stands out as the one truly remarkable feature in the long and rather sorry business. Warned time after time by Lord Rosebery and many another, privately and publicly, of the necessity of reform, the Lords collectively heeded no one. A year ago the thing would have been easy, and to-day the Upper House might have stood on a firmer and sounder basis as the arbiter between the Commons and the people. Even six months back an honest attempt at constitutional reconstruction would, at any rate, have saved them from the overwhelming and irreparable blow that has befallen their estate and dignity; but in the vanity of ignorance and arrogance they could see nothing. This class ignorance has been the cause of their undoing. From the day that the Lords, acting upon the advice of more or less irresponsible hotheads in the Conservative Party, abandoned their own right of independence and threw out the Budget, the end was palpably inevitable. The true friends of the Lords told them so. Every Liberal, every clear-thinking man in the country saw that the Peers had thrown away their chief weapon, which was their constitutional function as a revising and suspending chamber. From that moment war was declared. Now, by the very nature of its composition, the House of Lords in the English Constitution possessed no power to make or stop revolution. In making one, they threw away not only their real and unassailable directive faculties, but the basic pediment of their whole constitutional being and justification.

In their fight, necessarily impotent, against the Constitution and the Liberals who defended it, the Lords have been the sheer tools and puppets of the Conservative Party. It was convenient, no doubt. During the long reign of Conservatism, following on the defeat of Gladstone, the Upper House sank more and more into the position of the mere formal registrar of the Conservative vote, rendering all Liberal legislation nugatory, until at last, with the inflation of jingoism as the result of the Boer War, the Constitutional Government of the country passed tacitly and effectively into the smile of the Tory leader. Surfeit of power divorced them further and further from the

actualities of modern England—and "surfeit is the father of long fast." The Lords looked upon the struggle between themselves and the Commons through a comic-opera glass, and the piece turned out to be a tragedy. Necessarily, inevitably so. The Lords misjudged the situation because, as a class, acting for a class, seeing but a class, they judged it, not by any standard of fact and reality, but with the prejudice of class superstition. Instead of the people, they saw only the fences that hedged this and that interest together; instead of fact, they saw only the framework of tradition.

Throughout they have been deceived, misled, and, as generally happens to those who follow the blind, they, the headmen, have paid the penalty. This ignorance permeates the whole Conservative Party. It refused to believe in the guarantees. It declined, in the drawing-room and in the Lobbies, to credit Mr. Asquith or even the Chancellor with ordinary political sanity. "The King will never make the Peers," was the common Tory shibboleth. "The King will never dare," was another popular pronouncement. No sort of question as to the constitutional merits of the question. It being the fashion to call names, the Liberal Ministry were endowed with all the sins of humanity, but there reason stopped. Nobody attempted to understand the true trend of things, because nobody really wanted to. And so when the shock came, and the Prime Minister made his plain statement in the House, with the hysteria of impotence the shout was "Treason."

Treason! How? To whom? By whom? To the Lords? No, obviously, for the Duke of Wellington accepted the principle of the Lords' hypothetical veto as far back as 1832 before a similar threat of baronial creation. By whom? By Mr. Asquith? But that is not possible, for the threat was announced many months ago, and publicly stated as to be applied for. To the King, then? How so? The precedent was established in 1832. It is an admittedly constitutional weapon of coercion. As such it has been discussed on every platform and in every drawing-room in the land. It has always been regarded as the last resort and crowning mercy of a Liberal Prime Minister. To shriek treason at its application is to call the dentist who stops one's decayed tooth a traitor. To pretend that it was extracted from the Sovereign under false pretences, that no one

knew it was coming, that it was infamous to ask the "young and inexperienced" King for such a bludgeon—all that is the merest party invective, deceiving no one. It is only one more deception in the long record of self-deception practised by the Tory Party, dating from the conspiracy of Tariff Reform when the Peers were suborned into partnership.

The proof lies in the fact that it was unnecessary to use the bludgeon, and that the country generally was entirely indifferent as to whether it was used or not. What the Tories have never understood is that there has been, in the true sense of the word, a conservative revolution, as was the case in 1688, a movement of the forces of order and government, of the rooted conservative powers of the country, in the cause of order and government, at the head of which, as Crown and symbol, there stands the King. All through, this has been a bourgeois revolution, only secondarily the affair of what are called the masses. Now it is perfectly right to call it a revolution. But the men who lead the movement against the Lords are men of order and peace, fighting for the same principle that Cromwell fought for and won in 1688—that Parliament should retain the sovereign power it had assumed. It became revolution from the moment that the Lords defied the Executive, which is the supreme right of Parliament. The authority of the Crown lies in the mystery which surrounds it. The King has had nothing to do with the revolution of the Lords. In the matter of the guarantees the King has but performed his constitutional duty. Any other interpretation is demonstrably false. It is of a piece with the whole rigmarole of silly talk that has characterised the Lords' political campaign in the Tory Party, from the ignorant arrogance which marked its inception down to the mock-martial metaphors of those who went forth with Falstaffian bravado to die gamely in the ditch.

Now, the Iron Duke did not do that, and his capitulation stands as the one achievement in his political career. When Lord Halsbury announced his intention to die in the last ditch, he meant no such thing whatsoever. He knew as well as Mr. Balfour and Lord Lansdowne knew it, that if the Parliament Bill was rejected the catastrophic creation would follow automatically. When his followers, shouting irrelevant military phrases, as obsolete as the Tudor armour in the

Tower of London, got up a kind of exhibition bruise at the last minute to fight a battle that they knew had already been fought and lost, they did it not to rescue the House of Lords—which was already impossible; not to create a better House of Lords—an idea which had never entered into their philosophy; not really to defeat the Bill, but simply for the party reason that they reckoned a "puppet peer" creation would go far to "dish" Mr. Asquith's leadership. Had it been possible to save anything, to redeem anything, to create anything by this noisy display of mixed metaphor and bravery, then the "Die-Hards" would have earned immortality, and the country might conceivably have sympathised with them. But there was nothing to save, to redeem, or to create. They and everybody knew that. They went out to battle on an issue which had already been decided in the spirit of schoolboys who stone what they know to be an empty hole by the river-side on the chance that it may contain a badger.

Englishmen like a man who will walk the plank singing "Britons, Britons never shall be slaves," but beyond the Peter Pan stage the feathers, whoop, and war-paint of the Red Indian do not impress him, and so Lord Halsbury and his braves have found. All that they accomplished in reality was to bring off, *in articulo mortis*, a quite creditable Indian war-dance, a kind of rag-time political "busto," which will go down to history as one of the funniest displays of feudal ineptitude chronicled in Great Britain. It meant nothing; it could mean nothing. Its sole motive was party-political. The result was that though, we are told, some gentlemen in the Carlton Club that night booed one of the Peers who voted against his reason but on his conscience, London, giant, silent London, bought its "white seal" and other favourite evening newspapers, not to see how the war-dance was progressing, but to follow the fortunes of cricketing Surrey.

The one was cricket—the other wasn't. Immortal sub-editor! Most doubly right. Is it not the key to the whole political situation? Now, had Lord Halsbury and his valiants gone out to fight a year ago, had they and Lord Hugh Cecil kicked up an Austrian Reichsrath rumpus at Westminster, not once, but on some dozen occasions, had they sought to browbeat the Throne and terrify the constituencies into submission, say, about the time of Mr. Balfour's Referendum speech, why,

at any rate, they would have obtained a hearing. That would have been cricket, a true fight, in which they would have gone down, as many of their ancestors went down on many a stricken field, with honour and glory. They might even have saved some remnant of dignity. But to begin fighting after time had been called and the national umpire had given the victory on points was petty and fatuous. It shows how curiously out of touch these stalwarts must be with the whole spirit of modern England, with the economic conditions, problems, and exigencies of this scientific age, in which the aristocracy as such has ceased to be the head of plutocracy, which is stronger, younger, and more vital, and is itself the handmaid of democracy.

In the same way the derision and anathema cast upon the Conservative Peers who voted for the Bill is equally petty and futile. It has never been the function of the Upper House to resist measures blindly and obstinately, but to act upon the will of the people. Granted that opposition was no longer feasible or even sensible, those Peers who voted for the Bill displayed brave if vain contrition; they played the constitutional game. Their attitude is quite as intelligible and worthy as that of Lord Rosebery, who voted "Aye" and then solemnly affixed his name to a protest containing ten paragraphs of reasoning, of which the last ran: "Because the whole transaction tends to bring discredit on our country and its institutions."

For, consider, what does that mean? For a Peer in the Upper House to vote for a Bill that he does not approve of carries with it no indignity, each Peer being free to vote as he pleases, under no party, vote-catching trammel or obligation. He has often done so in the past, and no man called him renegade. He did this in the interests of the whole community, in the performance, therefore, of a national duty. If every time the Lords accepted an unwelcome Liberal measure they had solemnly recorded their antipathy to it, the whole business of the House of Lords would have become farcical. Nothing is gained by such a protest. In all probability the Lords collectively think every Liberal Bill calculated to "bring discredit" on the country, but they have been wise enough hitherto not to inscribe their grievances in the log-book of feudal displeasure. Why did Lord Rosebery—he who of all

the Peers in the Kingdom has urged them so earnestly and persistently to reform? If he so ardently disapproved, he might have ranged himself on the side of the Conservatives as an abstainer. It would have been more dignified than this little war-whoop on his own.

If the direct and immediate cause of this Tory cataclysm has been the joint feudal and capitalistic movement of Tariff Reform, which, culminating in the collusion between the Tory Party and the Upper House, divided the country into two fundamentally antagonistic class camps, the philosophy of it all lies in the unnatural and obsolete conditions of our political institutions as against the system and machinery of our modern economic life. Our political system, which has survived as the mean between feudalism and democracy, is a whole century and a half behind the economic polity of the country. On the one side we have intensely progressive economic conditions and ideas subjected to a system of control which is in character feudal. So long as the Lords preserved their independence and accepted the will of the people it worked, if chiefly because it was an institution and we are a congenitally peaceful people. But the moment the breach widened into rupture the whole fabric of the feudal armoury fell into pieces. If we pause to consider it there is no reason for regret. The polarity in the economic and political conditions of the country was making itself more and more uncomfortably felt, setting up class against class, dividing the community into those who rallied under the banner of what has been called the democratic idea as against the parasitic forces of feudalism, with which are included the idle rich, the Church, the trading classes, the "Services," and a considerable section of capitalism. The same discrepancy exists in Germany, only there the difference is essential. It is that the feudal political machinery of Germany is still all-powerful, in that it is socialised in a central military bureaucracy, under the person of the throne; whereas our nobility has no military authority, we have no bureaucracy and no conscription army, and the executive is the House of Westminster.

In Germany the answer is Socialism; in England it is Mr. Lloyd George and the new democratic idea. The failure of the Conservative Party to grasp that elementary and perfectly obvious fact has been the root cause of their present

disaster. During the long tenure of their administration they paid no attention whatever to the problems of social reform, overseeing the entire question of what may be generalised under the term of political economy, as if no such thing existed. The African juggernaut, the war, jingoism, the seductive vision of an all-British imperial economic empire, founded a school in which political economy, the conditions of labour and capitalism, in a word, reform, had no part or tenement, and when it failed the whole party was left demoralised and barren. The charge which then fell to the lot of Liberalism showed the enormous gulf existing between the country and its rulers. Within a few years the whole Liberal programme has been enlarged and changed, beyond the wildest dreams of the fiercest Gladstonian Whig, into one of rational Socialistic evolution. If there is no Socialism in the Continental sense, there is still less of the old Liberalism left in the country. What has happened, what is happening, is the levelling process of adjustment of the political system and machinery to the economic exigencies of the age.

This is the age of Smith and Brown and Tomkins; of science; of the people and all that is called popular. Modern England is for the first time in history literate; it has begun to have a mind Its national heroes are no longer soldiers, dukes, and conquerors, but bourgeois social reformers, as they are in France and Germany. Nor is there anything very terrifying in the change. The danger lies in the non-acceptance of the facts. It is not that the conditions of party political life in England have suffered any violent alteration: it is the conditions of life itself that have altered, requiring nice and proportional adjustment. It is not that there is any spirit of red revolution in the land, anarchic, anti-monarchical, or even Socialistic, but simply that, as the growing power of civilisation is capitalism, so is the inevitable repercussion of labour the more distinctive and intense. The problems of modern reason of State are the problems of labour and its conditions. Feudalism in Western Europe is, as a force, extinct. To-day the problem is the land, the masses, the laws and economics of production.

In settling the railway strike, Mr. Lloyd George has asserted himself to be a real statesman: the country will not forget it. Meanwhile rain has fallen. The political and

proletarian hotheads will be able to recover their British equanimity; and we can reasonably attribute a good deal of the recent neurasthenic irritability to the abnormal heat of this summer. Things will doubtless settle down now to their ordinary norm and tranquillity.

The task devolving upon the Liberal Party is gigantic, and may prove disastrous. Upon them will lie all the odium, all the responsibility of failure, for, unlike the Tories, who are in no sense shattered as a party, they are not united by any bond of class or land interest or even of capitalism. If they fail, and the Conservatives come in again, as extremes breed extremes, so will the Social Democracy of the Continent come into this country. That danger will always be their pitfall. It is unlikely, in the absence of any apparent lead or statesmanship on the Tory side, that any constructive policy will be possible between the two parties, who will fight each other, as in the old, bonny, careless days, with the party rancour of the game. The first question will, of course, be Ireland, hitherto the snag of all statesmen. There can be no doubt whatever that the Conservatives will pursue the same tactics in the same blind and vituperative manner that they did in 1886, and as they have recently done in the case of the House of Lords. It will be useless to ask for statesmanlike consideration of the problem, which will be treated by those who gilly for them in the newspapers as a splendid opportunity to get back into power, in cynical disregard of the national urgency of a solution and the vital importance at stake. There are no signs that the Conservatives have learnt anything from the lesson of August 10th. Ireland will be fought as a national danger, as a Separatist plot, as treason to dismember the Empire, and there will be the bogey of an Irish rebellion. It is a big cause—it will be a big fight. It will be the supreme test of Liberal achievement.

Terrible, shameful words will be said, despite the Conservative flirtation with the Irish and the curious mysteries attaching to it. It is a national pity. But, unless all indices are misleading, once more the shouters of treason will be betrayed. So far as constructive idea is concerned the Tory policy is as empty as Madame Humbert's famous chest; nor, beyond a strident and remarkable aptitude for abuse and recrimination, do those who lead them profess or propound any progressive

scheme or any kind of policy that is not grossly party-political and destructive. So long as the Tories persist in running their policy on purely class and antiquated lines they will remain fruitless and negative, without a leader whom the man without the party ring can follow, without faith or hope or charity.

So the greatest revolution since 1832 was accomplished to the antics of a war-dance, amid the superb apathy of London. If a moral is needed, it is how relatively little the political party game matters in these modern days, how deep is the economic change that has crept into England. Already the subject is almost forgotten. There was no malice in the business. No tocsin sounded the knell; no bell was tolled. The Lords went out—*felo de se*, and so *basta!*

Of far greater significance to London, to the country, to Europe, was the scene that night on Tower Hill, where there was something positive being accomplished. It was very late when I found myself there, still talking over this apathy of London to my friend, who, having shot big game most of his life, thought this little matter of politics an "infernal wheeze." "That's where we ought to shut up all you Radical fellows," he jested, pointing to the great Norman keep, which stood frowning against the almost Italian night sky in massive, sinister magnificence.

It was quiet enough, but men moved strangely and fitfully about; otherwise the old historical ground seemed as dormant and apathetic as the rest of London. Yet not quite. Up near by where the gibbet used to stand we noticed a light in a little room, and every now and then figures flitted swiftly to and fro by the window. It was the little room where the dockers' strike leaders were working, writing, settling, arranging. Close by us stood a huge City policeman in the shadow, motionless, inscrutable as a sphinx. My friend offered him a cigar. "Wish I had a gun," he remarked, no doubt thinking of his game in East Africa. The policeman hid the cigar away in his tunic, and, jerking his head upward towards the light, said sententiously: "Take it from me, sir, them's the blokes that rules us nowadays."

An Empty Country-side

By F. E. Green

On the wind-swept summit of Inkpen Beacon stands a gibbet. A gibbet has stood there, so the shepherds tell me, for over two hundred years to mark the hanging of a husband and his mistress who had murdered the wife by throwing her into a hornets' nest. Tragedy takes deeper root in the country than it does in the town. In the sunlit country purple shadows are visualised more intensely than in the grey-toned city. To-day the gibbet standing a thousand feet high, with the wind ever moaning through its arms, grimly extended against the cloud-racked sky, is a sinister symbol of the tragedy of a land bereft of human life.

Here, in days gone by, beacon fires blazed in commemoration of England's Imperial triumphs. Hither came shepherds and labourers, farmers and carters, woodmen and stockmen, to jubilate over England's greatness beyond the seas. But to-day, though it would not be difficult to find the rubbish to burn, from the acres and acres given over to sport, it would be difficult to get the men from the hillside or valley to build the beacon. The gibbet to-day stands as a landmark, arresting, sinister, pointing, on the right and on the left, to an empty country-side.

From this height of a thousand feet the eye traverses several counties—Wiltshire, Hampshire, Berkshire—and grimly envisages the one prevailing note: the absence of human life. Sheep-bells gently tinkle in the distance, and as we descend the hill into Hampshire we meet a man in velveteens with a gun over his shoulder. He is the typical rustic here; and in him lies no hope for the future. While he remains, the husbandman departs.

I had walked from Basingstoke to Kingsclere, nine miles along the turnpike road, passing in all, I think, only seven cottages. From Kingsclere (where I received the malediction of a man and missed a stone thrown at me because I had ventured to tell poor Hodge that he should be loyal to his fellows) to Ecchingswell I passed but one cottage, and that

was built in a disused chalk pit, and only one person between Ecchingswell and Whitmay, and that a child, in a distance of four miles.

Hodge is an isolated unit working in large fields, living under the roof of a farm-tied cottage rented by the large farmer who rules this country-side with a hand of iron. The feudalism associated with rural England darkens life here as elsewhere, but is potent as an economic force rather than as a personal factor. Grooms and chauffeurs throw you a supercilious look as they notice your dusty boots and the rücksack on your back. Cottage women, who bear the unquestionable stamp of having served as ladies' maids, answer your questions with the meticulous languor of duchesses. Oppressive as all this is, there is yet an element of comedy. We get, at any rate, the pageantry of life. But at Coombe, lying stagnant in the cup of the hills, we come upon grim tragedy, unrelieved.

The field I crossed to reach the village was full of withered, unharvested grasses, and tall seed-bearing wild carrots and thistles, shoulder high. Rabbits scurried away at almost every step, while pheasants and partridges filled the air with a whirr of wings. The first cottage I lighted on was literally falling down. The thatch had long disappeared, leaving the rafters and beams bare as bones to the skies; the garden, a waste of luxuriant weeds, where brambles were trying to cover this rueful desolation. As I entered the village I passed a row of four cottages under one thatch. Only one was occupied, the other three, with their doors and windows battered in, had been given over to the rats to play havoc in and for the wind to whistle through. From the occupied cottage issued a slatternly young woman with a sporting dog, probably a gamekeeper's, at her heels. They tell me that many of the cottages in this village and most of the land is owned by a city magnate, and that when a family leaves a cottage to seek employment or the higher wages and the larger freedom of the towns, no attempt is made either to repair or to re-let the cottage. For an influx of human life may disturb the pheasants. Where pheasants are wanted, the peasant is not. Very much the same thing seems to be dominant at Coombe. Coombe is now one vast rabbit-warren.

The more enlightened of the village schoolmasters do not encourage any of the smarter boys to remain on the land—and who can blame them? Wages in this part of Hampshire and in Wiltshire adjoining are only twelve shillings a week for

labourers, and fourteen shillings for shepherds and stockmen. No promise of higher wages is held out by the large farmers to induce the more efficient of the boys to remain on the land. Indeed, I believe there is a movement to persuade the parents to take their boys away from school at the age of thirteen, for the sake of the extra shilling or two to be added to the family purse. This, by law, unfortunately, they are allowed to do if the boys are sent to work on the farms. It is the usual loophole left in an Act of Parliament to enable the powerful to prey upon the weak. But the smarter boys invariably leave at the end of the year. Thus the land is deprived of brain-stuff, becomes labour-starved, denuded of capital, and derelict. Where it does not actually go back in fertility it is merely marking time. This is the natural sequence to a landowner's policy of devoting square miles to the preservation of pheasants, and grudging square yards for the preservation of human life.

On one side of this beautiful valley leading from Coombe to Hurstbourne Tarrant are many good agricultural fields, which at one time must have grown corn, as we can see by the stitches left by the plough. They are now growing thistles and burdock and wild parsley. On the other side of the valley can be seen acres and acres of good corn-land planted with little fir-trees as a covert for game. I saw fields as bad as these near Whitmay, where I trespassed in the long grass which hid me and my camera whilst a company of sportsmen passed by in the next field. But the irony of the wasted fields of Coombe is brought home to us, when we learn that it was on the slopes of Inkpen Beacon that Jethro Tull, the great agriculturist, used the first drill, and wrote the book that revolutionised English agriculture.

Here we look in vain for what Cobbett saw in 1822. "This is to my taste," he wrote, "and here in the north of Hampshire it has its full gratification. I like to look at the winding side of a great down, with two or three numerous flocks of sheep on it belonging to different farms, and to see lower down the folds in the fields ready to receive them for the night." I wonder what Cobbett would have said to the winding side of the great down to-day, converted into a rabbit-warren and a pheasant-preserve.

Cobbett had an eye for the beauty of the earth, but he could see no beauty where poverty stalked the land. When wages had dropped from eight shillings to six shillings a week, he tells us how he saw some reapers, "very pretty girls who were as

ragged as colts and as pale as ashes." As pale as ashes! Great God in heaven, what our farming landowning forbears were responsible for in those good old days, with the gallon loaf at a shilling and a halfpenny, and wages at from six to eight shillings a week! There are some who can see beauty in decaying thatched cottages, some who see beauty in girls as ragged as colts and as pale as ashes; as much beauty as in a glittering cobweb hung on the horns of the moon's crescent, and left to swing in the wind there. *They* have never lived cheek by jowl with want.

Let us not plume ourselves with the white feather of Free Trade and wages at twelve shillings a week instead of eight. Four shillings a week is nothing to brag about after eighty years of mechanical inventions. Men are no more willing, with an increased standard of comfort generated by education, and higher rents to pay, to bring up their families on twelve shillings a week than they were to bring them up on eight shillings. The subjective poverty of the poor is more intense now than in 1822.

Starvation, it is true, may not be so apparent in the country-side as it was of yore. It has merely shifted its quarters. As the people leave the country-side, starvation, attaching itself as a camp-follower to the rural exodus, finds its lair in the foul dens of the cities.

Yet the patience and the endurance of the English peasant is extraordinary. I stayed near Coombe with an elderly man who kept a wayside inn. He had been one of nine in family, supported by a father whose wages were eight shillings a week. Such was the dogged endurance of the father that it was his rule to make one straw skep every day after work, and it was part of the son's duties as a lad to walk many miles in order to sell these at one shilling each. In the winter this "unskilled labourer" made hurdles for sheep, and he, now living, has become a small farmer. It was he who once made a straw armchair for the good rector of Coombe.

Coombe lay under a cloud the day I visited it. Sad-eyed children were carrying flowers to the churchyard. A brave old rebel now lay under the sod. This was the rector, aged eighty-three. "Ah, I can remember," said my friend the innkeeper to me, "at the time of Joseph Arch's agitation, when my father was only getting eight shillings a week! I can remember the Sunday morning when the rector said in his sermon: 'You farmers go to Newbury once a week and you spend in that one day on your dinner and your drinks more

than you give your carter for the whole week.' That evening the rector was locked out of his own church by his churchwardens—they were our biggest farmers; and there was no service for three weeks after."

I took off my cap to this brave departed soul as I left Coombe by the rough valley road for Hurstbourne Tarrant. During the whole of this six miles' walk along this beautiful valley I met not a soul save a John and a Mary, who, with arms still interlocked, seemed amazed to see me. I passed only one group of cottages, which formed the hamlet of Netherton, and here I noticed that the few scattered cottages were given numbers such as 146, 148, etc., in large metal letters, as though they belonged to some convict colony. "Why," I asked a cottager, "are your houses numbered here?" for there was no sign of a street. "That's Mr. ——'s doings," came the answer, with a wry face. Then it dawned upon me. This landowner could not be bored with Yew or Rose Cottage, and no doubt every man on the estate is numbered in like manner.

As I left Netherton it was only natural that my thoughts should turn from Mr. —— to our English squirearchy, to the Parliament Bill, for our "backwoodsmen" here are in full cry. "Where is our old aristocracy?" I wondered. Here is Mr. ——, with a director of the Bank of England, dominating the whole of this country-side. Afterwards, when I got on to the road to Salisbury, I found the beautiful wooded estate of Norman Court, at Winterslow, was in the hands of another merchant prince, and the princely Clarendon Park, a few miles away, in the hands of Mr. Garton, the brewer.

The absence of human beings in this valley grows upon you, until you begin to wonder if you really are in England. This is the high road from Hungerford to Andover, and yet it was crossed and recrossed in the broad daylight by innumerable rabbits. Grass grew avidly in the middle of the road. Apparently it had time to grow between the going of one cart and the coming of the next. No motors haunted this road; no hedges flanked it, nor ditches either; but on either side was a broad stretch of green grass, and then beyond, tier upon tier of oaks and beeches up the hillside. It might have been a valley in some distant uninhabited country. I lay down on the grass by the side of the ribbon of road to rest my back of the rücksack and to drink in the beauty of the valley. Save for the flapping of the wings of the pigeons, the plaintive cry

of the plover, and the poignant call of the pheasant, not a sound was to be heard.

When I rose, greensward and roadway were speckled with the white tufts of the bobbing tails of countless rabbits, and as I walked forward companies of them kept retreating, like sections of an army at the sound of the bugle. The sight was enough to stir the blood of the most indifferent of poachers. No wonder when I got to Hurstbourne Tarrant all available accommodation had been taken by the "shooters" from London.

Leaving Hurstbourne Tarrant for Andover one passes through Doles Wood. Here I lingered, and it was here that once again I was impressed with the endurance, the resourcefulness, the thrift of the English peasant, especially the peasant who is a craftsman of the woods. The sound of a billhook or an axe in the wood always allures me. I found the woodman, a man of fifty or sixty years, making hurdles.

"Be you the gen'leman what came round with the squire t'other day?" he remarked. "Who is the squire?" I asked. "Mr. ——," he answered. "I know Mr. George —— as a writer," I said. "Why, he be the son of the squire," promptly answered the woodman. At last, then, I had happened upon an estate owned by one of the old race of country gentlemen. He became communicative, asked me if I cared to listen to his "clapper," and proceeded talking. "The squire and I," he rambled on, "don't agree on politics. Now, he said to me t'other day, 'If you've got any property, Smith, Lloyd George will clap it on to you.' I said, 'Well, sir, I have got some property, but I ain't afraid of Lloyd George.' Then the squire he exclaimed, 'You got some property, Smith! How is that?' He looked astonished like, as though I ought not to have it, and I have been working 'ard for nigh 'alf a century." And then, in the leisurely way of those who live in intimate contact with the oak, whose lives are never fretted by hurry, he narrated to me how, two years ago, his wife had proposed that he should buy a cottage near by that was to be sold. He scouted the proposition. Where was the money coming from? She pointedly asked him how much he had stowed away. He then boldly declared his worldly goods to be in all £20, the accretion of little gifts and "overpluses" from bark-stripping and tree-felling. Thereupon his wife owned up to £40, which she had secretly stored in the family teapot. At this the woodman slapped his knee, and said they could do it. The cottage could be had for £60. "I knew she had put

by summat, but had no idea how much," the woodman declared. thoroughly enjoying the situation of each saving in secrecy. There was £4, too, " for the writings," the cash for which also came out of the teapot, the visible contents of which amazed the husband as much as it did the squire and myself. I asked him how it was done, for at most his earnings did not come to more than three shillings a day. He said his wife had saved most of the money when their sons were big lads, and she had put by the money paid in for their board and lodging.

Through Andover we make again for the billowy downs. Here a sea of grass under wide skies lies open to the eye, where each long throw of the downs is crested by a sinuous wood flung over the ridge like a curl of sea-foam left high and dry, and crystallised through the æons into a coil of massive foliage.

" It is all very well," my critics may exclaim, " but how can you fill this bleak land of chalk hills with a thriving peasantry ? " My mind immediately travelled to the once derelict fenlands around the Wash, now peopled with small holders living in clean white houses that I saw gleaming in the sun this summer, and to the rough moorland holdings of Verwood. That it can be done even on the moorland here I will show, where the wind is so bleak that, as an old man remarked to me of Over Wallop, " There you can *see* the wind." The practical illustration is near at hand. We have but to climb the ridge and enter Winterslow.

Here on the bleak hillside in 1893 Major Poore bought a farm of 200 acres. He made the one and only bid for it at £7 10*s.* an acre. It was accepted, and he then formed what he called a Land Court (for Major Poore is strong on Anglo-Saxon customs), whereby a system of copyhold tenure was knitted together by a thin thread of communal interest. The members of the Land Court parcelled the land out to one another at rates varying from £8 an acre to £30 an acre. The purchase money was payable in fifteen years. All the original purchasers have now paid for their land, and, with the large surplus of £1,400 acquired over the deal, every member has built a house with money borrowed at 3 per cent. On these small holdings a new village has practically been created at Middle Winterslow.

It must not be supposed that the men have bought their land and built their houses solely out of the profits of their holdings. Most of them are skilled woodmen, often spending the entire winter months in the woods at Norman Court,

where each buys a few acres of underwood, and of this makes as many hurdles, wattles, sheep-cribs, and bundles of faggots as his skill can contrive. It is the holdings, though, which give them work throughout the summer, work independent of a farmer-landlord, and which secures for them a roof over their heads. Even on this rather poor and very exposed land, where little intensive culture is practised, I found one small holder making his entire living from his eight acres.

As a whole, the result has been a triumphant success, not as measured by cash returns, but in the more intimate sense of achieving a greater measure of freedom. Here wool, sheared from the sheep of the downs, is spun by the cottage women and woven into beautiful cloth at a large hand-loom; and we might imagine that even the shepherd who minds the flocks on the downs will some day be clothed in the wool shorn from the sheep he tends.

So happy has been this experiment of repeopling this empty hillside where a farm was going derelict, that it has inspired a Tory landowner from the New Forest, Mr. Clough, to buy an estate of 1,000 acres for small holdings amid the folds of these downs, and already the green valley which dips beyond West Winterslow is dotted with small holders' houses of red brick. Yet it is here, and only here, along the whole range of the Hampshire and Wiltshire downs that I got any evidence of the rise of a new peasantry.

Over the ridge, lying meekly at the gates of the magnificent park of Clarendon, is the decaying village of Pitton. From the breezy, populous uplands of Winterslow we now descend to Pitton and plumb the deeps of rural stagnation. Here, where peasants are at a premium, men and women are at a discount.

The walk through Clarendon Park is instructive. For three miles I saw nothing but pheasants. The park was more or less like one vast poultry-run, with pheasants at every few yards running up against the low wire netting which bordered the drives. When we came to a meadow on the home farm the grass between the cows lying down to rest was hardly discernible for the pheasants!

Beyond Salisbury, where the silvery Avon cleaves the heart of the great Plain, we enter a vale of great fertility. Here little villages certainly do lie closely together, tucked away under thatched roofs, but as one thinks of the great empty Plain on the left and to the right one wonders what advance has been made during the last century to fill this fertile vale with happy homes. If one were to draw away the artificial population

introduced by the camp at Bulford, I warrant that little external change would be apparent since Cobbett rode here in 1826, and that the rural population would be even less. And yet here is a fertile valley where small holdings, with a large military camp as a market close at hand, might achieve a distinct success.

Now I am going to make a particular indictment against the powers that be which rule over this vale of the Avon. I do not know if the labourers of Coombe, wretchedly despondent, have ever sent up a plea for land; but I do know that the Wiltshire peasant, who is ever slow to move against constituted authority, who to a large degree recruits our Army, who has lived for generations in farm-tied cottages under dictatorial employers, who is difficult to stir to revolt, has applied for land again and again all along this valley. The whole vale from Pewsey to Amesbury is murmurous with discontent. The land remains locked up in large estates, and the War Office is now one of the largest owners. There are many farms of 2,000 and of 3,000 acres here, but, except at Enford, there is not a rood let to small holders. The War Office refuses to let the land to small holders; the colleges and hospitals which are large owners around Pewsey also refuse to let land to small holders; the large farmers who constitute the County Council are here, as elsewhere, opposed to small holdings, for small holdings will give labourers a measure of independence, and to the Wiltshire farmer the independent labourer is anathema.

Feudalism, dull-witted, dies hard in the vale of the Avon. During Sir Harry Verney's fight for a seat in the Commons a labourer's child was flying Verney's red favour. A vicar's wife, whose name I shall not mention, came down like a hawk upon this irresponsible, light-hearted politician. "Do you know what colours you are wearing?" admonished the lady in a tone of great solemnity. The bewildered child was speechless. "Those," said the lady, pointing to the red rosette, "are the colours of the Devil. *Blue* is for God—and the country."

But what of the driving force to see that justice is done to landless men? What of these High Commissioners appointed by the Board of Agriculture? The driving force! . . . Let us see the kind of spirit evinced by the driving force at a public inquiry in Worcestershire. One cannot help comparing the populous vale of Evesham, where tillage by small holders is encouraged, with the vale of the Avon, where tillage altogether is discouraged, and life is on the ebb.

At Figheldean, where there has been a strong local demand for land, the Commissioner came down from town and appeared to be duly impressed both by the applicants for land and by the site suggested. But the land belongs to the War Office. So elderly military officers, with bristling moustaches, had to be consulted. They came down, scowled at the land, and promptly returned to town. Their line of argument seemed to have run jingle-wise like this: "Small holdings—impossible—cavalry manœuvres—small holdings—French gardens (*vide Daily Mail*, their favourite statistical bureau)—tomatoes—land covered with glass—cavalry manœuvres—on glass—damages frightful—Empire smashed!"

It would be useless, I suppose, to tell these experts that it takes about £900 an acre to capitalise a French garden, and that the Wiltshire labourer might scrape together in all £9. They prefer to let the land to large farmers at 2s. 6d. an acre rather than to small holders at £2 an acre. I walked over a farm of 2,000 acres where the mangolds in one field could not be seen for the thistles. In an adjoining field I saw an allotment of one rod worked by a schoolboy, from which he had sold 7s. worth of vegetables, besides supplying his mother with many vegetables for the table. In the one case a farmer with capital at his back was producing hardly £5 an acre to the national wealth, and the other, a mere schoolboy armed with a spade, was producing food at the rate of over £56 to the acre. Let us hope that the appointment of Mr. F. E. N. Rogers as the new Commissioner for Wiltshire will be the means of bringing these badly tilled broad acres into intensive cultivation.

Yet one ray of light has percolated into this valley. This has been shed upon the decaying village of Enford. The Board of Agriculture has at last actually compelled the Vicar to sell his glebe land of 149 acres. At the valuation inquiry the reverend gentleman valued his land at £3,310, the County Council land agent at £2,400. The arbitrator awarded £2,520. Surely in the public interest the Board of Agriculture's valuer should always be a servant of the Board who has no private *clientèle* to satisfy.

Apart from this little ripple on the surface, the vale of the Avon still lies asleep. Enterprise is throttled by the fingers of the powerful. On the other side of the great Plain land has been unlocked at last; 5,000 out of the 10,000 acres belonging to Mr. Walter Long have come into the open market. The Budget, it is said, is beginning to do its work; but it is more

than probable that when this land is sold the Wiltshire labourer will still be landless, for he is of the poor and needy. The Budget may be the key to unlock the land, but the people have yet to be restored to the land. It remains to be seen if Mr. Lloyd George's personality or the recently appointed six extra Commissioners can humanise a Board that has become intensely bureaucratic.* If they cannot, then the next move will be the massing together of the countrymen who have sought work in the cities and not found it, with their landless fellow-labourers from the open fields, and *this* time the colour of the banner held on high by those who hunger for the earth may be blood-red.

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As I stepped out on to the open Plain, so generous of space, so niggard of homes, the wonder of the new world hovered over the mystery of the old—Stonehenge. Though man has equipped himself with wings, Hodge, isolated, with bent back and toil-smitten hands, still works with prehistoric implements on land that is not his, at a wage of twelve shillings a week. Yet it is on his labour that the world of Science and the whole fabric of our civilisation ultimately rest.

* In my article, "Agricultural Contrasts," published in THE ENGLISH REVIEW, September 1910, the appointment of new Commissioners was at that date strongly urged.

Our Citizen Defence

By Sir Hugh Gilzean-Reid, LL.D., F.J.I., D.L., &c.

It is remarkable, though not exceptional, that many even in high places still fail to realise to the full extent the quiet and bloodless revolution which has been going on for three or four years in the domain of Home Defence. The old Volunteers passed away, or were absorbed with the new Army Act; and we are apt to forget that it took over half a century to build them up, fighting courageously, as they did to the last, against military obstruction and even public neglect. Without adequate funds or proper organisation the struggle went on, involving enormous sacrifices on the part of officers and men, but their day was done, and a more modern and efficient substitute had to be devised. Several statesmen valiantly tackled the difficult and delicate problem, and, it must be said, signally failed, not through lack of willinghood or even ability, but simply because they had taken the wrong "turn," and did not possess the special foresight, organising faculty, or contagious inspiration essential to success. The new and great service was reserved for one who had long played a leading part in the House of Commons, and on many occasions modestly displayed exceptional qualities and the rare gift of organisation, and who, as Lord Haldane, is still carrying on, with surpassing aptitude and unabated faith in the people and reliance on their readiness to help, his great and patriotic work, which is steadily producing large and, to those best able to judge, eminently beneficial and enduring results.

At first the new Act was regarded with a measure of suspicion, and condemned as impracticable and destined to prove a failure, notably by retired officers and others—who had not studied the provisions of the new Act or made themselves conversant with existing conditions in the country which only needed to be understood, wisely grasped, and stirred into wholesome activity—holding, as they did, and on every available occasion declaring, that the voluntary principle must be forthwith abandoned, and that only enforced military service in some form can secure and maintain any adequate home

defence. For some time past, ever since put to the test, facts and experience have gone against them, and changed to a considerable extent the former attitude. Military authorities of indisputable responsibility have given their cordial approval and adhesion, and admittedly discovered that whilst being in the fullest sense volunteers with absolute freedom of action, the Territorials are servants of the State under strict military discipline, equipment, and training. Conclusive examples can easily be adduced from different quarters of experienced and independent Regular officers who at Inspections and at the Camps—attended thus far by a high percentage of the citizen soldiers—have spoken in the most unqualified terms in praise of the men and their fine appearance, one great commander, after hours of severe drill, intimating to a Yorkshire battalion that he would not be afraid to "enter battle with them to-morrow." The Duke of Connaught, an officer of eminence and wide experience, paid a timely and generous tribute to the self-sacrifice and efficiency of the Territorial Force; and in the recently published *Compulsory Service*, by General Sir Ian Hamilton, with a masterly "Introduction" by the Secretary for War, there is a striking recognition of a significant event. In an official report to the War Office, which forms a large part of the book, General Hamilton recalls the event in these words: "You remember the parade of detachments of Territorials at Windsor. There were assembled together fishermen from misty islands of the North, miners from the West, countrymen from the South and East, artisans from Birmingham, and all sorts and conditions of life from the great melting-pot of London. They had come from all points of the compass to receive their colours from the King. In two Continental capitals have I seen a similar parade, and you may take my word for it that in no essential point did our ceremony suffer from the comparison. Regular officers present were amazed. . . . The men were first-class men, free men, alive to the business on hand, and previously prepared to perform it so as to reflect credit on their corps." Major-General Sir John Steevens, K.C.B., addressing the veterans, warmly congratulated them, adding these approving words: "We have in our midst a large number of men who have seen service in either the Regular, Volunteer, or Territorial Force, and these naturally constitute a great military asset if properly used." Colonel à Court Repington—than whom no sounder or more discriminating military authority can be named—has from the first given in official reports and contributions to the *Times*

priceless assistance to the new Force. At a meeting largely composed of officers he said: "I have never varied in my opinion that the Territorial Force has immense possibilities for good." And like testimonies might be multiplied without limit. On every hand there are reliable indications of genuine advance. The issue, under the direct authority of the War Office, of the *Army Review* is a concession to the prevailing democratic consideration and treatment of national questions; known to be under the editorship of a distinguished officer and brilliant writer, it cannot fail—if reasonable latitude in the expression of the writers' opinions is allowed—to attain a distinctive and useful position.

As Vice-Chairman of the Middlesex County Association, and having from the first taken an active part in promoting the movement throughout the country, besides keeping in constant touch with the head-quarters, I am in a position to speak of what I know and testify of what I have seen.

It is difficult, no doubt, to realise fully what has actually been accomplished, in spite of opposition and the doleful lamentations of high-placed and in some cases devoted workers in the cause, and too many who have from the outset persistently tried to discredit and obstruct the movement. The Duke of Northumberland asserts that "democracy is simply that kind of government which invariably prevailed in the decay of a State." Such pessimists never miss an opportunity of impressing on the minds of their hearers or readers that they have no faith in the underlying principles which form the basis of the Territorial system, and undisguisedly welcome any indication of failure—caused it may be by their own discouragements—as evidence that the only security is to substitute compulsion: a systematic depreciation only calculated to strike hope and enthusiasm, without which no national or international movement ever succeeded, out of men's hearts and thereby help to produce the very results deplored. It is true that large and small sections of workers in almost every branch have at times revolted, under a sense of real or imagined grievance, even against the advice of their own chosen and generally trusted leaders, but the same can be said in respect to all classes, including powerful minorities of the so-called "higher grades" in the Commons, as well as in the House of Lords. Although two blacks may not make a white, these intermittent outbursts ought not to be allowed to discredit the whole body, whether industrial or political.

It is all easily understood; indeed, these doleful critics

frankly admit that their hostility arises chiefly from want of faith in the Democracy, which some at least dread and dislike, perceiving only mischief in its rapid extension and organised aggressiveness throughout this country. There can be no question that the incessant preaching of this gospel of despair has tended to retard enlistment, particularly in and around London, where the influence is directly felt. Mark, as examples, how entirely different are the interest and results in the Midlands and North of England, where the full establishment lists were long ago completed, and continue to be overflowing. Working-men, argue the pessimists, look always, and will look increasingly, for mere salaried servants, whom they can control, curtail, or dismiss, it being, as Lord Esher alleges —whilst occupying a high position and personally rendering valuable help in the London Force—" obvious that under a democratic form of Government " these are the conditions that must prevail, and that " disinterestedness, patriotism, even self-respect, are mere words only of archaic meaning." Simply to say that this is a caricature of what is known of applied democracy in this or any other country is putting it mildly; anyone without inborn bias, or possessing any personal knowledge of existing facts and actualities, will admit that there is no foundation for such damaging allegations, which are obviously all the worse considering the influential quarter from which they emanate. If all those who hold like opinions would take a little wider view of the situation, these dismal forebodings and ill-informed assertions as to the decay of the voluntary spirit would be greatly qualified, if not entirely dispelled.

Look only at our co-operative societies, friendly societies, the trade unions, and other working-class organisations, and mark the practical outcome of this dreaded Democracy as it may be seen in actual and active operation.

These institutions have millions of widely-scattered members and ever-increasing millions of invested capital; the management involves on the part of many hundreds enormous responsibility and incessant and laborious effort; and yet all, or nearly all, the exacting services are freely rendered—of a truth without money and without price; a striking embodiment and exemplification of serious voluntary work without parallel in other departments of activity or in any other class. These hundreds are chosen by popular vote, and before election they must have conclusively shown, in some position, real ability, keen sense of discrimination, and a genuine desire to be helpful to their

fellows—honesty of purpose and capacity of management, commanding at once respect and absolute trust. The sacrifice, as experience has proved, which true democracy can make, and is making every day and on all hands, ought to have preserved it from the unjust and fallacious aspersions to which it has been subjected; unquestionably, one of our securities for the future lies in this ready and self-sacrificial service, which ought to be generously recognised and encouraged in every possible way.

Look at the undisguised eagerness with which all sections of the community, even the poorest, have been practically uniting in every centre to provide worthy memorials of King Edward; note the municipal, parliamentary, and philanthropic duties hitherto freely and with undisputed efficiency discharged by those who have to toil for daily bread; and—when called upon and active service was declared to be needed—note the even more impressive fact that in little over three years some 400,000 joined one or other of the citizen forces—the Territorial, Special Reserve, and Veterans—and laid well and truly the foundation of a Home-Defence Force exceeding in number half a million men, conspicuously the very *élite* of British industry in physique and intelligence. A writer in the *Times* testifies from observation, in reference to the historic event of 1911, that "never was a Coronation so democratic in the sense that never before did people who had no seats in the Abbey, or even in stands or windows, show their sympathy and consent—offer their 'homage and service' so freely and generally."

Needless to say, all this must be persistently maintained and extended to make the Force absolutely secure and immovably permanent. Certain sections of the community hold aloof and selfishly pursue their own ease and pleasure, rendering it difficult in some localities to secure the requisite numbers, but there is solid reason for saying that the force of example and judicious awakening of dormant sympathies are gradually producing, in every county and town, satisfactory and increasing results, and will continue to maintain a defensive force thoroughly prepared and always ready for action when required.

Further, it was at an early date decided by the War Office that a Territorial Reserve of £100,000 must be constituted; whilst, in connection with almost every County Association, Cadets are systematically getting into military order, Middlesex practically leading the way in this vitally important development, skilfully directed by Colonel Sir Reginald Hennell, D.S.O.,

of the King's Body-Guards, from the outset an enthusiastic sympathiser and helper in the voluntary cause. As one high military authority observed, "The Boy Scouts have solved the problem of National Defence"; and tens of thousands have been formed into companies and battalions, with all the ardour of youth. Officers' Corps, worked effectively through the Universities and Public Schools, are an unqualified success, and are most effectively supplying one "felt want" of the Citizen as well as the Regular Army, and opening up a fresh outlet for capable young men, who can in this way prepare for, and become officers in, the Regulars as well as the Territorials. Of course, only time can tell whether all these necessary conditions can be maintained and steadily extended, but the early progress made and the widespread interest awakened supply strong and well-grounded assurances that this will be steadily done.

Nowhere else in the world are the Sovereign and representative institutions of a country regarded with profounder respect, supported with livelier interest, or served with readier loyalty than by the industrial class in Great Britain, which unquestionably stands unrivalled in its patriotic impulses. What more, it may be well asked, could be reasonably expected or desired? Should not all this, which is beyond intelligent dispute, be accepted as a welcome guarantee of present and future security; and should it not be the paramount duty of every loyal citizen to keep alive and wisely utilise this noble spirit?

There are, happily, no party distinctions in the Citizen Forces. At King Edward's call the county magnates came promptly forward, at the right moment, and took up the new and arduous task with promptitude and well-marked capacity—this reawakening of the county, in itself, a vindication of the clear insight and enlightened confidence of the promoters. Nor is King George indifferent to what is occurring. On a memorable occasion it was truly said: "The country will regard it as a signal proof of the sagacity and courage of our present King that he should have been willing at the very outset of his reign boldly to enlarge the precedent of Queen Victoria, and to handle a very critical situation in a spirit worthy in all respects of his illustrious father, King Edward the Peacemaker." And later, the King had 35,000 Boy Scouts—assuredly one reliable and entirely spontaneous source of security, and a solid hope for the near and the distant future—at Windsor, and in a Royal and truly inspiring message

expressed pleasure at seeing so many detachments from all parts of the Kingdom, adding these impressive words :

" His Majesty welcomes this opportunity of showing his appreciation of the great voluntary work which is being carried out by men and women of all classes, who are striving to further the advance of sound training and education among the rising generation of the Empire. The healthy appearance, as well as the smartness and keenness of the boys, surprised his Majesty."

Many thousands all over the country have joyfully joined the Cadet Corps, not in any mere war-inspiring spirit, but with a simple and sincere desire to be of real service in time of need to King and Country. Well may it be said that to-day the Boy Scouts are an Imperial asset, embracing the flower of the nation's boyhood ; and those who have witnessed various competitions in which the lads have engaged need not fear for the physical stamina and hardihood of the rising generation of Englishmen. Besides, adds the *Mail*, Birmingham (which is a strong Territorial centre), the moral influence exerted by the ideals to which " the boys " aspire is bound to tell enormously in the building up of a race which has no fear and is prepared to make any needed self-sacrifice when called upon.

We have assuredly entered as a nation and an empire on a new and wide field of peaceful defence against any possible contingency ; and never more than at the present moment " England expects every man to do his duty."

Let me add that it surely would be prudent, and for the ultimate good of all concerned, if everyone in authority would agree to give the voluntary principle an adequate trial ; it would save millions a year if permanently successful, and verify the extent and endurance of the patriotic sentiment which in national emergencies has often been manifested. Should it become evident that universal service may be needed as a further protection against possible enemies or invaders, no reason would then remain for any section, however strong might be their personal views, refusing to support what would, after all, be only a drastic, though to many a very objectionable and discrediting, development of existing conditions. It ought to be made transparent to all that, when the need arises, Great Britain presents a united front, ever ready to defend its highest and most cherished privileges against all possible conflicts and complications. The acute and capable editor of the *Observer*, referring to the historic event of the year, puts it thus incisively : " We think the moral is plain,

and it is the old moral. When we are all roused and pulling together, there is still more force and power of management in this country than in any other country in Europe, and we are certain that will count in the world if we are ever thoroughly tested again as a nation and an empire."

But, beyond all this, it must never be forgotten that the seas constitute our primary and essential protection; that the open sea must be maintained if only for the sake of our own and the general commercial necessities. The Navy should be regarded not as a mere instrument of war, but as the marshalled police of the great waters, placed there to keep open passage for every peaceful sail, and to safeguard the vast industry of the world's sea traffic. And, to a large extent, happily, this enlightened and generous spirit predominates in almost every country—an impressive and growing change which should be welcomed with intelligence and discretion. Look around! America—which conceded penny postage and was prompt to negotiate a friendly commercial alliance with Canada—captured distressed and oppressed Cuba, and speedily made it essentially an independent republic, as the Philippines must be in due season. Turkey, the land of deepest darkness and direst tyranny, arose in an overwhelming demand for liberty and good government. Although all the extravagant expectations may never be experienced, many subtle and threatening misunderstandings have been peacefully settled at the Hague Court of Arbitration, and many more will undoubtedly follow. There is, indeed, much to inspire fresh hope for the future; the mills of God grind slowly, but they do grind; the morning of full fruition may dawn amidst startled surprise; in spite of clouds we can discern empires supreme because of their moral strength, their fair and honest intentions, their reverence for truth and right, their honourable aspirations after universal brotherhood, and their indisputable desire to maintain and extend everywhere the eternal principles of Justice.

Book Notices

POETRY

EYES OF YOUTH: A BOOK OF VERSES. By HERBERT and DANIEL.

The book of lyrics recently published under this attractive title would be remarkable, if for nothing else, for the four early poems by Francis Thompson with which it opens. It is well worthy of critical attention on other grounds, but these poems give us the key to the rest of the book. This does not mean that the other writers belong to the "school" of Thompson. Mr. Chesterton, in his foreword, very rightly utters a timely protest against the modern mania about plagiarism and the way in which modern critics talk of a "school" or a "one-man influence." It would indeed be a bold modern poet who could feel so independent of the rest of literature, so completely outside its complex evolution of form and thought, that he could use the word "derivative" as a weapon against his fellow-poets. There is no poet on the rolls of fame against whom, with a little hostile desire for elbow-room, Zoïlus could not bring an overwhelmingly destructive accusation of this kind. What would Milton be without the ancient epics and the English Bible? Was not Shakespeare an upstart crow tricked out with the feathers of Robert Greene and a hundred others? Did he not learn a trick called blank verse from Marlowe? Is not his description of Cleopatra's barge simply a versification of a contemporary translation from Plutarch? Did not Ben Jonson steal "Drink to me only with thine eyes," word by word, from the Greek Anthology. And *In Memoriam*, that unique measure in English, did not Tennyson purloin it, manner, form, even the cadences which have so long been thought peculiarly his own, from the laureate Ben himself. But the modern mania for tracing these influences in a merely hostile spirit, without regard to any of the wider aspects of the case, is carried a great deal too far by the people who cannot understand that men may share ideas as well as steal them, and that all progress depends on the results of the past. In the great periods of literature it was possible for poet after poet to write drama after drama on one great mythological story. Amongst our own Elizabethans there was so great a likeness both in the form and substance of their works that their lyrics and their drama might almost be regarded as the greater and lesser achievements of one stupendous poet. Critical research is for ever bringing about a kind of "general post" of authors among them. The author of the sonnets to Delia changes place with the author of the sonnets to Celia, and the author of *The Weeping Devil* changes places with the author of *The Spanish Dagger*. It is more than ever absurd at the present day to make it the function of criticism to discourage all effort and cut short all endeavour by pointing out influences. For there was never a time when literature was so

elaborately varied as at the present day. The progress of our literature from Elizabethan times is simply an illustration of that world-progress from homogeneity to a highly organised and specialised heterogeneity; and it might be said that at no period in the history of the world were the poets, though necessarily dependent on the past, so independent of each other. In fact this process of differentiation has gone so far that it has led to a real danger of far more serious aspect than could be found in a wider communion of ideas. If there is one great need in the literature of to-day it is that we should regain the power of co-ordinating the whole world of ideas. We shall never again have a great world-poetry so long as we merely specialise in pessimism, in optimism, in imperialism, or Celticism. It is good for our world to expand in a thousand directions; but the time has surely come when there is a need for poetry to regain that central intellectual position from which it can make a new and greater synthesis and see the world once more in unity. We must see the skull with the pessimist, and also see the larger hope of the optimist. Here, I think, lies the significance of Francis Thompson. It would be easy to say that he derived the "black tents" of his Arab love-song from the Arab love-songs of Mr. Wilfred Blunt. It would be easy to point out that some of his most exquisite metres are taken direct from Drayton. We might take a third of his work and say this is derivative from Patmore, and another section and say this *Dream-Tryst* is sheer Rossetti; but, if we did so, we should be striking at the roots of perhaps the most important literature of the last twenty years, and certainly at the roots of what is destined to be as fruitful in the twentieth century as the poetry of Keats was in the nineteenth. The poets who immediately preceded Francis Thompson revelled, for the most part, in analysis, in splendid iconoclasm, in beautiful sensuous dissolutions. But they could not construct. They could not co-ordinate their world. The poet who wrote *The House of Life* was really only dealing with a single room in that house, and with beautiful fragments of life. He was not co-ordinating his universe in one far-sweeping vision, as Dante co-ordinated it when he grasped the whole of it from heaven to hell and showed it, moving in harmony, to his fellow-men. It is of little avail for Swinburne to chant "Glory to Man in the Highest" on the one side, while we have the antiphonal voice of Mr. Hardy on the other, pointing out with equal force that man is no more than a padded skeleton, his earth a little ball of negligible dust, and that his best wish for 1960 is that "thy worm should be my worm." Let me say with all the emphasis at my command that this criticism does not imply any lack of appreciation of the real greatness of Mr. Hardy's work, or any lack of thankfulness for its bitter and profound sincerity. But these singers represented a great transitional stage from an old synthesis to a new, in which all these contradictions should be reduced to some sort of order and harmony. It is quite impossible to think that we are to look forward only to a series of grave-diggers' scenes without relief and without finding their proper place in the great and newly organised vision of the universe. This work of co-ordination and synthesis, in which lies all the hope of the future

progress of our poetry, was begun anew by Francis Thompson at the end of the nineteenth century.

> When to the new eyes of thee
> All things by immortal power,
> Hiddenly,
> To each other linkèd are
> That thou canst not touch a flower
> Without troubling of a star.

So he sang in *The Mistress of Vision*, a poem which is the *Kubla Khan* of the twentieth century, but a *Kubla Khan* of cosmic sweep and philosophic precision for all its visionary beauty. There is the great theme emerging, perfect in the sublime logic of beauty, the golden mathematics of harmony, the planetary movement and august laws of song, "whose service is perfect freedom." We have done with "schools," "imperialisms," "artistries," pessimisms, optimisms, when we can pass those Gates of Luthany. We have done with sects and coteries when we can tread that "land of Elenore."

The poems in the book before us—*Eyes of Youth* is indeed a happy title—are nearly all touched with something of this new gleam. They are all early poems, too, and these two facts give the book a singular unity. What does it matter where the "black tents" came from, when—and surely it is not wresting the meaning too far—we discern even in this Arab love-song the first notes of that new constructive vision which even amidst our modern complications can, like Thomas à Kempis, see everything in unity.

> Leave thy father, leave thy mother,
> And thy brother;
> Leave the black tents of thy tribe apart!
> Am I not thy father and thy brother,
> And thy mother?
> *And thou—what needest with thy tribe's black tents*
> *Who hast the red pavilion of my heart?*

Two more poems that strike this note very beautifully are by Thompson's godson, Francis Meynell—the first entitled *Any Stone* and the second *Mater Inviolata*. The latter of these has been hailed with applause by some critics as a decadent poem. As a matter of fact, it deals with a subject which has been sullied by the decadents, but it deals with it as Sir Galahad might have done.

> When stars show unfamiliar faces,
> Laughing for love in their high places—
> When her essential lips are dumb
> In a thronged panic of embraces—
> Her maiden heart, her spousal breast,
> Shall throb surrendered and possessed,
> Throb, passion-sweet and ungainsayed—
> Now at the last am I a maid.

That may be very youthful poetry; but it would be well for the decadents if they could look out on the world with such eyes of youth. The poems by Francis Meynell in this book show not only remarkable technical accomplishment, but more power than most of the other contributions in that synthetic process which we indicated above as the significant character of Thompson's poetry. His *Dedication* is so brief that it is impossible to take it as proof positive of this capacity to co-ordinate his world; but certainly, taken with the poem entitled *Any Stone*, it justifies a keen hope for the future work of this writer. Certainly, it is at the opposite pole from the work of the decadents, which has always been of a destructive tendency. Some of the contributors have yet to master certain technical difficulties; and the whole book would perhaps be better if it carried out its own principles more completely. There is a tendency to be too deliberately artistic—a transitional stage between that of the mere Philistine and that of the artist to whom the method of expression has become so natural that he thinks no more about it. But, indeed, something of the Philistine, something of his great stupid superiority to mere turns and tricks of phrasing, is found in the simplicity of all great art. I may be using the wrong word for it, but there is too little in some of these poems of that real simplicity which distinguishes Wordsworth from some of the æsthetic modern Celtic writers. It is not a question of mere simplicity of language. Shakespeare is simple enough when he writes of "the multitudinous seas," and Wordsworth when he writes of "sorrow barricadoed evermore, within the walls of cities"; nor do I think it is mere familiarity that makes me feel these great poets to be truly and simply expressing their real selves in those magnificent phrases, while I cannot feel that Mr. Colum is really expressing a true thing in his translation from the Irish. The title "I shall not die for you" is so obviously the natural expression of the thought, that it is with difficulty and only with some sort of emotional pretence that one can read the poem itself, beginning

O woman, shapely as the swan.

Nor do I feel the right note in the apparently so simple and straightforward question of another writer to his lady—"Are you song-wise?" But I do feel it in Mr. Colum's magnificent *Idyll*, with the splendidly imaginative picture of the second stanza, and in nearly all of the rest of his work. The gorgeous last two lines of Francis Thompson's Arab love-song, quoted above, are the expression of his own soul and are, in the sense which I here give the word, entirely simple and right. It is only as a sincere compliment that one would urge the living contributors to this book to shake themselves free from the minor artistic shackles and tricks of phrase which obscure the true original impulse. For there is a true light shining through their Eyes of Youth which they should be proud to carry amongst their fellow-men.

ALFRED NOYES.

BOOK NOTICES

FICTION

THE HAMPDENSHIRE WONDER. By J. D. BERESFORD. Sidgwick & Jackson, Ltd.

THE EARLY HISTORY OF JACOB STAHL. By J. D. BERESFORD. Sidgwick & Jackson, Ltd.

In these two volumes Mr. Beresford, a name new to fiction, reveals himself as a man who has something to say very distinct and different from the ordinary rut of novelists, something that amounts almost to a message. *The Hampdenshire Wonder* is indeed a fine book, if it misses true greatness. We are arrested at the beginning. We trace a fresh scent, as it were. Long before the end we realise we have been interested and fascinated. It is all about a baby, too, a child born deliberately of a father who intended it to be a cricket genius, and who turns out to be a wonder. At two the child refuses to speak, refuses because that is the impression it gives with its great intellect dawning in its infant eyes; then it learns to read. In three weeks it has read and digested the entire *Encyclopædia Britannica*. It absorbs knowledge, reading at the rate of two volumes a day, and at the end of three weeks it pronounces the work to be a tangle—a "patchwork." All this is new and delightful. Mathematics, abstruse geometrical problems present no difficulty whatever to the child, and its only trouble lies in the strange affinity that the idiot of the village feels in its presence. Other folk chase the idiot away with a threat, but the wonder has no such power. The idiot is drawn insensibly, irresistibly towards this boy marvel, who, in turn, is rendered defenceless. So genius meets idiocy on a level plane. One day the wonder is found drowned in a muddy pond with his body encrusted in the slime. This is where Mr. Beresford has missed greatness. The idea is immense, but it is not worked out, possibly even has not quite been grasped by the author, who has but played with the possibilities of his theme. He should return to it. There is a subject of immortal stuff—genius met and defeated by insanity.

Jacob Stahl is not so original a work, and yet is remarkably distinctive. Again the author chooses a boy out of the common for subject, and the book is his life, his strivings and failings. Admirable characterisation throughout shows the author to be an observer of exceptional perception. The girl, Madeline, is a creation of the modern type. There is no maudlin sentimentality. Mr. Beresford sees life truthfully, and writes truthfully. He knows the world he writes about. He has cut out a new road. We have a new writer, and, judging from these two excellent novels, one who should make for himself a proud name.

THE MAID'S COMEDY: A CHIVALRIC ROMANCE IN THIRTEEN CHAPTERS. London: Stephen Swift. 2s. 6d.

If this should meet the eyes of any of those young men who are surrounded by dark perils, carry swords into the street, and set out every morning after breakfast to deliver the world from very repulsive

giants, let them read at once *The Maid's Comedy*. Here is a new Don Quixote riding out to avenge that sorrowful knight. Here is the story of two damsels in distress, who in these days have to ride errant over the plains and passes to find a knight to deliver them. It is fresh, inspiring, and humorous, and beautifully written. Incidentally, it is the only book that has ever made us want to go to South Africa. If the Colonies are going to teach us how to follow romance without sentimentalism, they may yet be the salvation of the British Empire.

ESSAYS AND GENERAL LITERATURE

THE PROVINCE OF THE STATE. By SIR ROLAND K. WILSON. P. S. King & Sons. *7s. 6d.* net.

Commencing with "the State as a justice-enforcing association," the author sets out on an exposition of the various functions of the State, and, while in many ways agreeing with the constitution of present Governments, he elaborates and expounds a system which shall produce an ideal form of government, assuring equal benefits—in matters of State control—to all members of the State. The book as a whole is made up of well-founded arguments for the maintenance of government on individualistic lines, as opposed to the theories propounded by H. G. Wells and like thinkers. But, though well founded, the author's arguments are not equally well expressed; in his preface he notes the need for additions to our existing vocabulary, and apparently that need has proved somewhat of a limitation in the book itself.

That limitation, though, is but small, and the work is well worth the attention of all who deal, however slightly, in social and economic questions. The author finds more arguments against than for State education, primary and secondary. "A child is nobody's property, but a potentially self-owning individual," and "for the all-important supply of unofficial observers and critics of public affairs a State-managed school system is not merely not necessary or helpful: it is in the highest degree detrimental," are characteristic observations. But here, surely, the author has lost sight of the object of education, as defined by all from Platonic theorists to Erasmus—to fit the child for its immediate environment, to enable it to take advantage of its surroundings for its own benefit, rather than to act as observer and critic of that from which it cannot dissociate itself.

The author frankly admits that his views are "very largely Spencerian," and in defining the functions of the State reduces them to the narrowest possible limit consistent with good government; the ultimate solution to the problem of an ideal state is to be found, according to him, not in Collectivism, but in the development of individual initiative, each member of the State being self-reliant and largely self-dependent. This view is advanced reasonably and carefully, and as far as possible without political bias—there are no purely party arguments in the

book, though it is more than likely that the next General Election will include many quotations from Sir Roland Wilson on the province of the State. He sees and comments on the need for a new party, worth joining not through "mere resistance to certain extremists, but some positive and fruitful conception of the proper sphere of Government." He believes in directing all energy "into the channel of voluntary and therefore varied enterprise, instead of into the channel of enforced uniformity," and, viewing justice in its broadest sense, avows himself a disciple of Jeremy Bentham in stating that justice, and no more, is the end of Government.

The point is largely controversial, still; here is sufficient argument in its favour to convince many, and to impress on all readers of the book that its author has good grounds for his contentions, which bear the hall-marks of sincerity and moderation of expression.

THE PANAMA CANAL. By H. ARIAS. P. S. King & Sons. 10*s.* 6*d.* net.

Although intended primarily as a study in International Law, in which province of literature it has a distinct value, this book is more interesting to the general reader by reason of the succinct outline which it contains of the diplomatic history of the Panama Canal. The comparatively recent growth of International Law, and, with the exception of parallels afforded by the Suez Canal, the absence of precedent from which to determine the purely legal aspects of the Panama enterprise, are well illustrated by the pains which the author has taken to define "neutralisation" as applied to the canal territory. This result of his researches on the subject is an important contribution to the literature bearing on international legislation.

M. Arias had, one may say, an extremely dry subject on the face of it, but he has succeeded in making that subject interesting throughout. It is exceedingly interesting, and sometimes even amusing, to note the elasticity of the Monroe doctrine in the hands of United States diplomatists—that doctrine, by the way, which has never been recognised as a principle of International Law, much as the States would like to claim it a principle. Amusing, too, is the account of Mr. Beaupré's "diplomacy" at Bogota, in the course of which he refers to "steps" that "every friend of Colombia would regret with sorrow." Rescripts of the Hay-Pauncefote treaty and of the Suez Convention are appended to the book, which accomplishes its object in giving with clear, unbiased brevity the international aspects attendant on the Panama undertaking.

THE INSECT WORLD (LES MŒURS DES INSECTES). By J. H. FABRE.

A year ago the French Academy crowned a book of J. H. Fabre and people began to ask who this Fabre was and what he had done. Richepin the poet went down to Languedoc, where Fabre lives at Serignan, and published an article on him which seemed like extravagant eulogy. Maeterlinck immediately followed suit in *Les Annales*, declaring

roundly that Fabre was "one of the glories of the civilised world." Claretie joined in the chorus of praise of the *savant*, whom Rostand says "thinks like a philosopher and writes like a poet." A quarter of a century ago, it now appears, Darwin called Fabre "an incomparable observer."

The son of a poor peasant in Provence, he taught himself to read by the light of pine cones, and he remembers as a boy suffering so from the cold in his garret in the winter nights that he used to go to lie with the sheep to get warm, and was often awakened by the howling of savage wolves round the fold. He paid his way through the college at Rodez by his services as a choir-boy. He made himself an excellent chemist, learnt all his masters could teach him about natural history and half a dozen other sciences, and then began to study nature for himself, while teaching a little to keep body and soul together. He read poetry, he tells us, by way of recreation.

He has discovered a new world for us, the world of the infinitely little with its countless tiny inhabitants, each living its own life and dying its own death. He shows us the aims and tragedies of their existence with simple scrupulous honesty, and this world of insects is more baffling, at once more wonderful and more terrible, than the human world we know. In the details, now grotesque, now horrible, we see self-abnegation and love, hatred and cruelty all working together to some unknown end. It is as if the endless garment of life were being woven before us without any object that we can understand, without any recognisable design even in the fabric.

Fabre's method of work is very simple. He catches his insects round his house with a net, and puts them under glass *cloches* in his laboratory with the herbage and soil they like best. He takes care, too, to keep them in the sunlight, and to give them the food they prefer. He then studies them from hour to hour, from week to week, and from year to year, till he has learnt how they live, and love, and pair, and murder, and die.

Let us take one small part of the field he has covered. Writing, for instance, on beetles, he gives wonderful instances of the foresight and self-abnegation of the mother beetle; then he goes on to show that the maternal instinct is often wise with the wisdom of a fiend, and cruel to a degree almost unknown among beings of a larger growth. The hardest problem is for the mother to ensure good food for her offspring—food that will remain soft and eatable, and if possible fresh, for weeks. Certain species have hit upon a remarkable way of solving the difficulty. Fabre found in their nests what seemed at first to him the carcasses of other beetles. Then he was struck by the fact that these carcasses had not gone bad. Studying the bodies, he discovered that the beetles were still alive, and they lived on under glass in his room for as much as a month or five weeks. Yet they could not move, and could do nothing to defend themselves—could, indeed, be eaten while alive by the tiny soft larva. They had been paralysed, in fact; but how?

First of all he noticed that nearly all of them belonged to one species, and then he discovered that this species had the ganglia or motor-nerve

centres concentrated just between the corselet covering the chest and the corselet covering the stomach. Here, then, was the vulnerable point. An experiment or two taught him that if he pricked them in this spot with a needle having a drop of ammonia on it, he could paralyse the motor-centres; in fact, could render the beetle as helpless as he had found it in the nest.

The insect is as wise as the man. The Cerceris beetle is the butcher. The Cerceris seizes the larger beetle by the head and pushes him backwards till the corselet protecting the chest and the corselet protecting the stomach are separated; he then darts his sting into the ganglia between the two armours. Immediately the beetle falls as if struck by lightning. Its legs may move spasmodically for a second or two, but that is all. Its assailant stands watching its victim in its agony. When the Cerceris sees that the beetle is quiet, he drags it off by the leg to lay up in warm storage for weeks and weeks, to be eaten bit by bit, while still alive, by the little larva. No more horrible cruelty can be imagined. But what cleverness in the Cerceris! Who taught the little beast the vulnerable point? If chance discovered the weak spot, it needed reasoning power to act on the discovery and turn hazard into instinct. But Fabre will provide us with instances of still more fiendish cruelty.

Everyone knows the terrible spider of the South—the spider with the black belly—the Tarantula, whose poisonous bite kills a mole or a small bird, and often makes even a man seriously ill. There is a waspish creature called the Calicurgue Annelé, or Pompile, not half the size of the Tarantula, and with a sting not a tithe as venomous, who does not hesitate to attack the great spider. On dissecting the Tarantula, Fabre found that the thorax was the place in which a sting could paralyse its motor-nerves. He then brought the two enemies face to face. The disproportion in size, strength, and armour seemed enormous; yet the Pompile was not frightened. He walked round the spider and halted, as if to seize it by a limb. At once the great Tarantula rose on its hind legs and opened its mouth; Fabre saw the poison glistening on its poignards. The Pompile walked away, but was not frightened. It was the Tarantula who showed fear and hate; he hurried after the Pompile and seized him; put his poison-fangs on him, but did not bite. Why not? Fabre could not imagine. But the fact remains. One day, however, the Pompile assaulted the Tarantula face to face, and stung him—in the thorax? No, he knew a trick worth two of that, a trick which the human anatomist had overlooked.

If he paralysed the motor-nerves the Tarantula might still bite him. With the utmost precision and care the Pompile stabbed the great spider in the mouth, thus rendering him incapable of using his fangs, and then, after examining his head to make sure it was powerless, he darted his sting into the thorax again and again, so that his young might not be incommoded by any movement of the spider. The little insect is as clever as a surgeon practised in dissection.

And yet this is not the last word in insect cruelty. The green grasshopper of the North (*la sauterelle*), it seems, is much better weaponed

than the large brown noisy grasshopper (*cigale*) of Languedoc. The green grasshopper simply hurls the other on its back and then plunges his head into its stomach and begins to eat it alive. He will finish a fellow as large as himself in two or three hours, and then be ready for another meal. Fabre tells us how he used to hate the noisy song of the grasshopper (*cigale*) till he came to realise what its life is. He puts it for us in one sentence. Four years of hard solitary work underground, and a month or six weeks of joy, and life, and love in the sunshine. That is the whole life of the grasshopper. For four years in darkness he works harder than any miner, and then at the end he suddenly puts on an exquisite costume, furnishes himself with beautiful wings, and flies about in the upper air intoxicated with sunshine and warmth, while giving himself to the supreme joy. No wonder he sings all day long.

There are dozens and dozens of chapters just as interesting as these in Fabre's books; the love-making of scorpions is more entrancing than any novel.

There is no space to tell either of Fabre's other activities. Just as Virgil was a little of a naturalist and a great poet, so Fabre is a great naturalist and a minor poet. Most of his poetry was written in Provençal, but some of it has been translated into unrhymed French without losing a great deal.

I always see Fabre sitting among his flowers in front of his little rose-coloured cottage with the pea-green jalousies. The note of the man and his life is perfect simplicity. He wears a broad-brimmed soft felt hat, loose clothes, a soft turned-down linen collar. His hair is worn long out of carelessness, his face is always clean-shaven. One is struck by the balance of it; the forehead both broad and high, the chin also both broad and strong, and not too fleshless, with a long prominent rudder nose. The eyes are searching, the eyes of the naturalist resting on the brooding regard of the philosopher. A face that Holbein should have painted, for Holbein alone could give us the effect of the crow's-feet and the intent piercing eyes, made small as if to shutter out the too strong light, the sharp eyes which are yet patient, and at bottom very sad.

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